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TONS OF REASONS TO PLAY THE CLERIC!

dragon

ISSUE 342 · APRIL 2006

OLIDAMMARA
GOD OF ROGUES
BY SEAN K REYNOLDS

9 MAGIC ITEMS WITH A HEALING TOUCH

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ECOLOGY OF THE ADVENTURER

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photo by Sean Glenn

YOU HAD TO BE THERE

Every other Thursday night I run an Age of Worms campaign for the Paizo editorial staff. It's a chance for us to unwind from the pressure of deadlines, throw some dice, tip back some beers, and laugh uproariously. Last week, the party set out from the besieged Blackwall Keep to the heart of the treacherous Mistmarsh, a forlorn swampland teeming with disease-carrying insects and ravenous monstrous beasts. In the early mornings, a thick fog seeps from the mire, giving the place its unusual name. To make good time, the party decided to travel throughout the day, lashing themselves together to prevent their separation. When I asked the players to line up their miniatures in marching order, I caught a few of them exchanging worried glances, knowing that something terrible was about to occur. A couple successful Listen checks revealed sloshing water off the party's left flank, the sound of something large but still obscured by the morning mist. Then, the swamp exploded in a swirl of muck and flashing teeth as two giant crocodiles burst from the water to attack the PCs.

The first snickers came when I put my monster miniatures on the table. I hadn't quite been prepared enough to pick up giant crocodile figurines from the local toy store, so instead I used stand-ins from the *D&D Miniatures* line. "That bulette isn't really a bulette," I said with a crooked smile and a shrug. "And that fiendish tyrannosaurus rex isn't really a dinosaur, either. Try to pretend they're giant crocodiles."

I'm happy to say they found it easier to imagine the crocodiles once I threw one character into negative hit points with a single bite, and enveloped another character—DUNGEON Assistant Editor Jeremy Walker's red-skinned halfling sorcerer Demon Boy—in the creature's mighty jaw (thank you, Improved Grab!). The following round, the second giant crocodile snapped up Jason Bulmahn's dwarf, and suddenly the party found itself flanked by two immense reptiles with stubby little flailing arms and legs poking out between their teeth. Every round, the crocodiles chomped down harder, and gouts of blood shot out into the swampy muck.

Naturally, everyone was howling with laughter. *Downer* artist Kyle Hunter leapt from his seat and rushed to the whiteboard, rapidly sketching a croc casually gulping down a panicking Demon Boy. When the halfling went into negative hit points, Kyle quickly erased the akimbo arms and put a little slack into his near-dead form. The crocodile crossed its arms nonchalantly, as if bored with its mid-afternoon snack. Without question, it was one of the funniest sessions of D&D I can remember, and it reminded me how integral humor is to the game we all love.

As this is the April issue, I've been thinking a lot about humor in the game and its place here in DRAGON. For years, the April issue has featured presumably funny content, often of the yuk-yuk variety, such as assigning monster stats to the pizza and Doritos that frequently litter a game table. Some editors have decided to eschew the humor element altogether. I fall somewhere in the middle. Cursed with a propensity to take the game very seriously, jokey content makes me a little queasy, as it often seems forced and sometimes seems absolutely useless in terms of gameplay. Humor in the game is often a spontaneous thing. I've no idea if the crocodile story above is as entertaining to read as it was to live through, but I suspect the retelling falls somewhere short of the event itself. Joke articles in DRAGON often rank among our most controversial, which is funny when you consider that the most popular features in the magazines are our great cartoons, which mix jokes and gaming every single month. This year, we decided to kill two kobolds with one crossbow bolt by asking *Zogonia's* Tony Moseley to provide the funny, which he does admirably in "The Ecology of the Adventurer."

Watch out for crocodiles.

ERIK

Erik Mona
Editor-in-Chief
erikm@paizo.com

SCALE MAIL

Tell us what you think of this issue. Send an email to **scalemail@paizo.com**. Please include your name, city, and state.

STAFF INFLECTION

I am writing in reference to Ben Vandgrift's informative article on "Staffs of the Magi" (DRAGON #338). In his historical and literary references I felt he overlooked a "recent" (1930) addition to the subject worth mentioning to your readers. In Robert E. Howard's Solomon Kane stories, particularly "The Hills of the Dead," Howard's puritan swashbuckler character Kane obtains an ebon staff—the head of which is vaguely catlike in appearance—from the Voodoo mage N'Longa. The staff is used to help Kane contact N'Longa, who proves to be a magical and spiritual advisor through dreams. Likewise the staff helps Kane fight undead creatures. It is also sharpened to a point at one end for use against more pedestrian adversaries and as a climbing tool. One line I particularly like from the story is that the staff will help the warrior where his "gun and long knife fail..."

Clearly there are solid sources in sword and sorcery fiction for hardy warriors to use magic laden objects in addition to the clichéd physically weak sorcerer of old. I hope these references get some thoughts going for your readers.

Murray J. Weed, Esq.
Hapeville, GA

Thanks for the reminder to look beyond traditional fantasy sources for inspiration. Anyone who thinks staffs are just for wrinkly old wizards would be wise to pick up the classic kung fu movie 8 Diagram Pole Fighter, *which for my money features the best staff fighting scene ever recorded. The staffs aren't knobby at the end and they don't shoot fire, but they hurt real good when they hit you.*

All this staff-talk is a great excuse to bring public attention to the recent promotions of DRAGON *staffers Jason Bulmahn, Mike McArtor, and F. Wesley Schneider, three of the hardest working game professionals in the industry. Congratulations, boys. See me for keys to the executive bathroom.*

340 COVER OUTRAGE

No, this is not a complaint about the scantily clad woman on the cover. I am all for scantily clad women.

However, you should not be allowed to use the phrase "The Stars are Right" without reference to the Cthulhu Mythos. It borders on a bait and switch technique of advertising.

Kirk Foote
Via Email

We were going for "geeky nerd in-reference as marketing pun," but I can see your point. Ftagn.

HAPPY SILVER ANNIVERSARY

This year marks my 25th as a DUNGEON & DRAGONS player/DM. As I look back, I remember the anticipation of each trip to the mall (40 miles roundtrip where I grew up) hoping that the newest issue of DRAGON would be waiting for me on the shelf. It's nice to know, 25 years later, that I still feel that same anticipation when I go to the local hobby shop (shout out to The Hobbit) to purchase each month's issue. Maybe that is why, after all these years, I would still rather buy it there than subscribe.

No versions and changes in the game since those early years have dulled my passion for the game. In fact, I think it is better now than it ever has been, and a lot of the credit for that has to go to DRAGON and her sister DUNGEON magazine. Thanks for the quality effort your staff puts into each issue, and

MINIS OF THE MONTH

One of the more interesting figures from *War Drums*, the new *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Miniatures* set, is Snig, Worg Rider. Originally appearing in *Archfiends* as a common, Snig the Axe is back as a rare, with his trademark weapon and riding a fierce worg. The first of its kind, these two miniatures allow you to portray the same character both mounted and standing alone for different situations.

Weighing in at just over twice the cost of the *Archfiends* figure, this Snig packs quite a bit more punch, including an additional attack, a higher commander rating, more powerful minions, and a mounted melee attack ability that allows him to attack once at any point during a double move. To top it off, Snig also keeps his useful command ability, granting bonus damage to small figures. Add this in to his amazing speed, higher level, and double the hit points of his previous incarnation, and you can see why this Snig stands up as a viable commander, capable of delivering significant hits while staying out of harm's reach.

the great art that graces the cover and pages each month.

Looking forward to my next 25 years of gaming and DRAGON magazine.

Walter A McWilliams
Via Email

Thanks for the kind words, Walter! It's certainly an honor and a privilege to work on these magazines, which do influence the game from time to time. A lot of concepts that went on to become major parts of D&D first appeared in these pages, and it's fun to think that something in this issue might still be fondly remembered in 25 years' time.

Readers who are interested in the history of DRAGON *and some of the articles that went on to become classics should check out the* DRAGON Compendium, *a 256-page full-color compilation of some of the best articles from the magazine's first 30 years. Initial response to the book was so strong that we sold through its entire print run in 64 days, and it is now in its second printing. All of the book's content has been updated to the latest version of* DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, *so you can do more than enjoy reading this classic material—you can actually use it in your current game! The* DRAGON Compendium *is available at your local hobby store or online at* **paizo.com**.

NOT-SO-PAINFUL MEMORIES

Fantastic job with issue #339. Naturally, as a 20+-year veteran of D&D, I have a soft spot in my heart when it comes to the so-called Campaign Classics. The PLANESCAPE setting was a particular favorite with my gaming group. Kudos to rk post for the exquisite rendering of the Lady of Pain, complete with tasseled scarves, a la Tony DiTerlizzi. It made me realize just how much I miss that setting.

Excellent move bringing *The Order of the Stick* on board. I'd never read it prior to its appearance in your pages, but after reading the initial installment (in issue #338), I was hooked. Never mind that my gaming group had an encounter with a chuul that was eerily reminiscent of the one featured in the Order's premiere episode; or that it happened a mere three days before issue #338 arrived in my mailbox. (And I do mean eerily reminiscent, right down to the same confusion over the use of weapons while grappled.)

Two thumbs up on the changes to the Class Acts format. I'm delighted to see you begin exploring the new (non-core) base classes, namely the hexblade, from *Complete Warrior*. Here's hoping that the swashbuckler gets similar treatment before long—there's a class with a ton of untapped potential.

And finally, what would a letter to DRAGON be without the obligatory criticism? In the Class Acts article on sorcerer/wizard spells in issue #339, Jesse Decker asserts that in addition to providing safe haven to the PC's, *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion* provides all the benefits of the clerical spell *heroes' feast*. My criticism, of course, is leveled at Wizards of the Coast, who appear to have omitted that benefit from my copy of the PHB. The scoundrels.

Jason Brown
Portland, ME

The wretches took it from my book, too, although I know I've played it that way in the past. The idea must have gotten in our heads somewhere...

BOUND TO CAUSE CONTROVERSY

While I can't help but agree that the original *Conan* film could have been better (really, what film is so perfect that some aspect couldn't be improved?), why don't we take some of your general criticisms and apply them to the current King of the Mountain, Peter Jackson and his *Lord of the Rings* films?

"The original *Conan* movie is okay as far as mid-80s fantasy goes, but it's not a particularly good movie, nor is

KNOWLEDGE CHECK
Question: What is Olidammara's favorite animal?

CHAOS WASTELAND
http://chaos-wasteland.dyndns.org:6969/
RPG BIT-TORRENT TRACKER

d20 system
SCAN REQUESTS

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS
- Hellspike Prison
- Spell Compendium [Color]
- The Red Hand of Doom
- Tome of Magic
- Power of Faerûn

paizo
- Dragon Compendium, Vol. I
- Dungeon #126
- Dungeon #129-133
- The Shackled City Hardcover

DRAGONLANCE
SOVEREIGN PRESS
- War of the Lance
- Holy Orders of the Stars
- Legends of the Twins
- Spectre of Sorrows

- Testament

GREEN RONIN PUBLISHING

SWORD & SORCERY
- Advanced Player's Guide

KNOWLEDGE CHECK ANSWER

Answer: Spell it backwards.

it a particularly faithful adaptation of Robert E. Howard's literary character, whom I quite like. And even the most ardent fan of the film must admit that at times it is very, very boring..."

Now I wouldn't catapult *Conan the Barbarian* into the realm of great movies, but is most certainly a good movie, and if you find yourself growing bored during a mere 2 hours of movie viewing, you might want to check your pulse.

As for the faithfulness of adaptation, I agree. It's kind of hit or miss, but in my opinion enough *Conan* comes shining through. (Aside: let's not forget that two of the writers were Oliver Stone and John Milius. Anyone think those two really cared about Howard?)

Jackson's turn. His adaptation of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy was absolutely awful! Aside from the visual beauty of the landscapes, wardrobes, and special effects (and just nailing the Balrog), not one single thing was done well. Faithfulness is the benchmark here, one often noted by Jackson himself, and he fell so short he can't even see the bench. Apologists say that the spirit of Tolkien's creation makes it through, but they're blind or, more often, haven't even read a word of the texts. I'd go point by point on this one, but something tells me the editors don't want a single letter to take up three or four pages.

Moving on to keeping the audience's attention, we can talk about the third film all by itself. Peter Jackson seems to be the Stephen King of film, he just doesn't know how or when to end a story. In our case my group of friends saw *Return of the King* at a midnight show and were naturally tired by the end, but even those who enjoyed the movie thought the last 40 minutes were completely unnecessary.

I don't owe Peter Jackson a darn thing. I think he owes the Tolkien family an apology.

The key to all this movie nonsense is that it is all opinion and that any of us getting hot under the collar, or just unilaterally heaping scorn and praise from on high and in print, is just silly. You like what you like, you hate what you hate, and everyone has their own reasons. Whatever floats your boat.

As Miss Manners would tell us, "everyone is entitled to their opinion."

But if you think Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* movies were good, you're wrong!

Smile.

Robert Hixon
Frederick, MD

I think Conan the Barbarian *is itself evidence, as you state, that scriptwriters Oliver Stone and John Milius didn't care about Howard when creating their fantasy masterpiece. On the other hand, nearly every scene of the* Lord of the Rings *trilogy thrums with reverence for Tolkien and the source material. You can nitpick about minor plot details here and there, but in the end all you're really doing is arguing for more Fatty Bolger and fewer interesting things for the female characters to do.*

Besides, what makes a movie good or not isn't how faithful it is to the source material. Movies, like licensed comic books and even roleplaying games, are merely interpretations of the original source material. That something is true to the spirit of its source is more important than its strict adherence to every little detail, or at least it ought to be.

Although parts of Conan the Barbarian *are brilliant (particularly the bit about the lamentations of women), it has some extremely tedious segments and plenty of regrettable moments (Thulsa Doom, anyone?). It's fun, and it's worth watching and perhaps owning, but as I said before, it's not a particularly good movie.* The Lord of the Rings *is three good movies.* —Erik Mona

Be Heard!

Tell us what you think on our new messageboards.

paizo.com

OOPS!

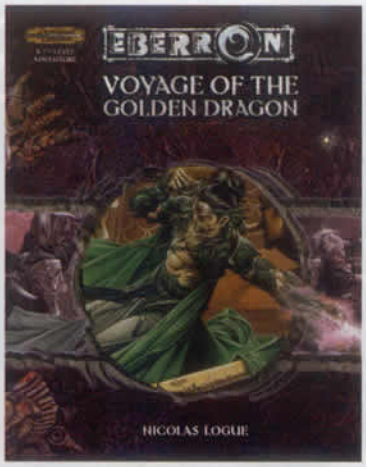
When you make a mistake during the game, do you ever try to run back time? "Wait," you might say. "He doesn't actually just do that." We here in the DRAGON offices sometimes wish our DM fiat and time control powers worked a little better in the real world. Here we go.

• January's Campaign Classics issue, DRAGON #339, featured the article "Races of Spelljammer" and a look back at some of the creatures and vessels of that spacefaring setting. Several of the ships in that article were based off new additions to the SPELLJAMMER setting and artful reimaginings by Steven James, who was mistakenly left uncredited. Check out his campaign notes and art at **silverblade-suitcase.com**.

• The Class Acts art in issue #340, attributed to Eric Deschamps, was actually created by David Bircham. We apologize to David and Eric for the misattribution.

NEW RELEASES

Open up your mind with the *Complete Psionic*. Including two new psionic classes, the ardent and the divine mind, espers of these groups use a new system called "psionic mantles." Especially popular with playtesters, mantles combine a philosophical theme with a granted power. Designers Bruce Cordell and Christopher Lindsay also add expanded feats, character options, and new items—like pre-built astral constructs that increase your power. Players can also master the dark thoughts of mind flayers with the creepified flayerspawn psychic. Additionally, the book's master list of psionic powers unquestionably belongs in any psionics-using campaign. –*S.B.*



You are cordially invited to embark on the maiden voyage of Eberron's largest airship, the *Golden Dragon*. There's a catch, though. Unlike the rest of the passengers, you are expected to keep the ship on course and safe from sabotage, hijacking, and general mayhem. If the ship survives, you and your allies can make use of it again and again.

Designer Nicolas Logue details this state-of-the-art airship and its major NPCs, weaving together a series of four adventures for 7th-level characters. *Voyage of the Golden Dragon* includes ship maps, detailed descriptions, and every thing you need to adventure on an airship of your very own. –*S.B.*

The third Fantastic Location, *Fields of Ruin*, bookends two double-sided maps with a battlefield-themed role-playing adventure for 8th-level PCs. Designed by Richard Pett, two maps cover the Keep of Fallen Kings, one features Encounters on the Road, and the last details the Dungeon of Blood. Besides being integral to this adventure, the maps mesh with *D&D Miniatures* set nine, *War Drums*, and easily adapt to other scenarios. Several monsters from the new *War Drums* set also appear in the adventure's battles, and their tactics are fine-tuned to take full advantage of the adventure's multiple maps. –*S.B.*

NEXT MONTH IN DRAGON # 343

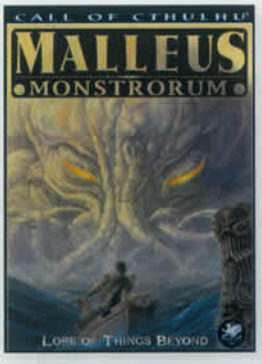
Creature Catalog V
by Wolfgang Baur, Sean K Reynolds, et al.
The Creature Catalog returns with twelve new monsters. From classic creatures like the norker to new terrors such as the hex dragon, these critters are hungry for the taste of adventurers.

Rivals
by Richard Lee Byers
A new FORGOTTEN REALMS short story about betrayal, trust, and hunting dragons.

Take Cover
by Hal Maclean
Rumbling up from below and swooping down from the skies, monsters have always had the edge when it comes to mobility, but not anymore. Learn the tricks to turn their edge against them.

Plus!
The Ecology of the Ettercap, Spells of Kyuss, Class Acts, First Watch, Sage Advice, Scale Mail, Wormfood, comics, and more!

reported by Shelly Baur, Joshua Cole, Mike Fehlauer, Mike L. Fiegel, and James Sutter



LOTS OF LOVECRAFT

Thanks to Chaosium (**chaosium.com**), there's never been a better time to be a Lovecraft fan. Confront the Great Old One Hastur in the *Tatters of the King* campaign for the *Call of Cthulhu RPG*, or build your own adventure using the *Malleus Monstrorum*, a brand new manual of monsters, minions, and alien gods. Plus, after numerous delays, *Secrets of San Francisco* is due to release this spring. Just want the stories? *Arkham Tales*, the latest Lovecraft fiction collection, comes chocked-full of pieces set in and around the infamous Massachusetts town. –*J.S.*

WHAT BIG EYES YOU HAVE

The better to see you with, my dear! And there's plenty to see in the new third edition of *Big Eyes, Small Mouth*, the three-time Origins Award nominated multi-genre Japanese anime and manga RPG. That's quite a mouthful, but BESM presents a system versatile enough to use with any genre game. The expanded and updated game mechanics feature a new roll-high system, archetype templates, streamlined weapon and mecha creation rules, new magic options, and a brand new dimension-hopping setting that complements the BESM ruleset. For more info, check out **guardiansorder.com**. –*M.L.F.*

ON THE EDGE

Adventure on the edge with two new Green Ronin releases this month. First is Robert Schwalb's *Mansion of Shadows*, the first in the Bleeding Edge adventures line. Pit your PCs against the sinister schemes of a treacherous noble family, and don't think that surviving on the bleeding edge of d20 fantasy will be easy.

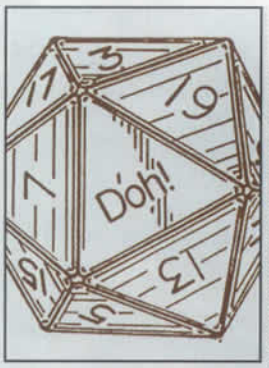
Also debuting this month is the *True20 Bestiary*. Browse and battle a bevy of brutal beasts suitable for every genre covered by *True20: Adventure Roleplaying*—which is to say any setting you choose. Check them both out at **greenronin.com**. –J.C.

COURAGE HAS A PRICE

One dragon overlord survived Krynn's War of Souls—the white dragon Gellidus. This terrifying beast plans to achieve ultimate power through the dark magic of his dead cousins, and only the bravest of heroes can hope to stop him. *The Price of Courage*, by Cam Banks, is the final chapter in a trilogy of DRAGONLANCE adventures from Sovereign Press that began with *Key of Destiny* and continued in *Spectre of Sorrows*, taking characters all the way from level 1 to level 20 and changing the face of Kyrnn in the process. For more, visit **dragonlance.com**. –*M.L.F.*

UNLEASHING THE HORDE

Not content with directing the course of *Warmachine*, the fastest-growing metal miniatures wargame in the industry, Privateer Press is releasing *Hordes*. All new but fully *Warmachine*-compatible, *Hordes* eschews steam-powered warjacks in favor of giant warbeasts driven by pure fury. Instead of resource management, *Hordes* is all about risk management. "It's about risking everything in one big attack," says Privateer's Nathan Letsinger. "If it works, you'll completely destroy the enemy. If it fails, your warbeast will turn around and bite your head off." The full-color 208-page *Hordes* rulebook, *Primal*, introduces the four factions of the game: the savage Trollblood, the mysterious Circle Orboros, the dragon-tainted Legion of Everblight, and the dreaded Skorne, each with their own history, units, and impact on the Iron Kingdoms world. Releasing with *Hordes* is a fully playable Battle Box, including everything you need to gore, maul, and trample your enemies into the dust. –*M.F.*



ROLLING IN D'OH!

Crystal Caste, long-time makers of dice, miniatures, and gaming accessories of all shapes and sizes, releases an all new dice innovation this month. Developed just in time for April Fool's Day, their new line of "D'oh Dice" replaces the "1" on dice of every shape with the word "D'oh," that ever-popular exclamation that sums up what everyone thinks when they roll a 1. Available in every color, pick up a bunch for your next gaming session, or give a handful as a gag gift to gamers with a habit of rolling badly. To get your hands on some "d'oh," visit **crystalcaste.com.** *–M.L.F.*

BATTY BLOODSUCKERS

This month, McFarlane Toys brings their unique style and attention to detail to the 1992 Academy Award-winning film, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. McFarlane Toys notes that this is the first action figure license granted by Sony for the popular Francis Ford Coppola interpretation of the 1897 classic novel. Dracula is the subject of the first two releases in the new line, appearing in both greasy bat and hulking werewolf forms. And the best thing about the new *Dracula* toy line: it's impossible to render Keanu Reeves's accent in plastic. See more at **spawn.com.** *–M.F.*

RETURN TO KRYNN

In 1984, Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman's novel, *Dragons of Autumn Twilight*, introduced thousands of readers to the world of DRAGONLANCE, inspiring fans and campaigns that persist even to this day. This month, Devils Due Publishing (publishers of the *FORGOTTEN REALMS: The Legend of Drizzt* series) releases the latest incarnation of the story that started it all with *DRAGONLANCE Chronicles: Dragons of Autumn Twilight*, a trade paperback edition of an eight-issue comic series interpreting this classic D&D novel. Check it out at **devilsdue.net.** *–M.F.*

HAIL TO THE HEROES

Return to one of the greatest turn-based strategy franchises of all time with *Heroes of Might and Magic V* (**mightandmagic.com**). Combining gameplay inspired by the classic *Heroes III* with cutting-edge graphics unmatched in the genre, take on the single-player campaign with the legions of factions like Haven, Inferno, or Necropolis, or defeat challengers across the internet with its enhanced multiplayer action. Series standbys such as a versatile map editor, unit promotions, and a wide variety of RPG-like hero development options round out what looks to be a very impressive package. *–J.C.*

THIS MONTH IN DUNGEON # 133

Chimes at Midnight

by Nicolas Logue

When's Sharn's master sleuth, Viktor Saint-Demain, fails to get the recognition he deserves, he sets out to prove to the city's people that they can't live without him. An EBERRON adventure for 5th-level characters.

Ill-Made Graves

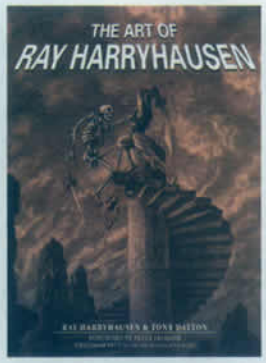
by Kevin Carter

The mighty dragon Oroshar lies dead, as does the barbarian king who slew him. Yet the dragon's wrath lingers in the dead king's corpse, waiting to awaken into something far worse than a dragon of flesh and bone. A D&D adventure for 7th-level characters.

Kings of the Rift

by Greg A. Vaughan

Dragotha's phylactery lies hidden in a ruin now inhabited by tribes of giants and in the throes of a draconic siege. Can the PCs discover the phylactery's vault before Dragotha's minions tear the city apart? An Age of Worms Adventure Path scenario for 18th-level characters.



RETURN OF A TITAN

Jason and the Argonauts. Mighty Joe Young. Clash of the Titans. With revolutionary films like these, Ray Harryhausen established himself as one of the greatest movie animators of all time and is regarded by many as the father of stop-motion special effects. Now Billboard Books (**watsonguptill.com**)commemoratesthese breakthroughs with *The Art of Ray Harryhausen,* a collection of more than two hundred color and seventy five black-and-white illustrations drawn from Harryhausen's stash of never-before-seen sketches, photos, storyboards, and more, all sure to impress and inspire movie buffs and monster lovers alike. *–J.S.*

GOBLINS ONLINE

The hottest new thing on the Internet is podcasting, and the *GOBLIN Gaming Broadcast Network* represents the gaming world through vidcasts and streaming media. Completely free, *GOBLIN* provides a central point on the web for people looking for podcasts related to all aspects of traditional pen-and-paper gaming, with more than forty shows available. Subscribe to individual shows like All Games Considered or the OgreCave Audio Report or choose an entire theme like D&D, MAGIC: THE GATHERING, or Geek Talk, and get all the gaming you can handle. Check it out at **gbncom.com.** *–M.L.F.*

FACE THE TRIBUNAL

Imagine a world where myth is real and wizards wield magic far beyond the understanding of mere mortal men. Atlas Games presents the new *Grand Tribunal* board game, based on the popular *Ars Magica* RPG setting. Players assemble powerful magical items and present them for the approval of their fellow wizards. The new magical devices are then voted on, with the most innovative arcane inventors winning the rank of archmage. The game includes everything needed to play, including more than 200 cards and game pieces. To learn more, visit **atlas-games.com.** *–M.L.F.*

NEW HORIZONS

Assume the role of a mighty dragon and take to the skies with the massive online multiplayer RPG *Horizons: Empire of Istaria* (**istaria.com**). Choose a dragon or one of ten other playable races and explore this family-friendly persistent world. Open multiclassing lets you create the perfect character for your adventuring needs. With a world that has been alive and expanding since 2003, *Horizons* has recently reset their game's storyline, adding a new plot, expanded history, and exciting new quests from the pen of Peter S. Beagle, author of *The Last Unicorn. –J.C.*

RPGA REPORT *by Ian Richards*

Back in 2004, the RPGA launched its very first *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Miniatures* Championship Tournament. In this first year we saw just over 40 combatants and a lot of smack talk as they battled for the victor's crown.

With 2005, we evolved and expanded, adding a second *D&D Minis* championship for limited play, building on the success of our first constructed event and challenging players to make the best warbands by drawing minis from sealed booster packs.

Now, in 2006, the challenge continues, and you could be the next champion!

We have a list of locations on the *D&D Miniatures* website (**wizards.com/minis**) where budding warlords can win a paid trip to this year's constructed final tournament in Indianapolis and vie for total supremacy. The overall champion walks away from Gen Con Indy with a unique advance release set of hand-painted D&D miniatures as a trophy and the chance to work with the *D&D Miniatures* design team to make a miniature to be included in a future set. That is to say nothing of the scores of *D&D Minis* you'll have to fill your luggage with for the trip home. And, as if you needed more, the winner gets automatic qualification to the 2006 Limited Championship finals in Anaheim at Gen Con SoCal!

It's hard to top that, but next issue we'll be looking at two of the biggest events in the RPGA's calendar: The 2006 D&D Open Tournament and the launch of the new Xen'drik D&D Campaign at Gen Con Indy.

Domain Power

Alternative Uses for Divine Energy

Clerics differ immensely in mission, role, and outlook depending on the deities they worship. No one would ever mistake a blood-soaked zealot of Erythnul the Many for a staid healer of Pelor, for example. Cleric domains reinforce this notion, granting a wide range of specialized abilities and unique spells depending on a cleric's specific field of expertise.

Sometimes, even these specialized powers are not enough to truly define the differences in faith. A vicious cleric of Hextor and a valiant cleric of Heironeous might both share the exact same domains of Law and War, for example. The following rules present new powers attached to the core domains presented in the *Player's Handbook*. Many of these alternative powers go above and beyond the standard domain abilities and, as such, require the cleric to forego other abilities or take a feat.

ATTAINING IMPROVED POWERS

The simplest way a cleric can gain access to the additional powers of his domains is through the selection of the Improved Power feat. While other options exist, the DM must decide which possibilities he allows in his campaign and may add additional requirements as well, such as a sacred quest or special ritual. Some DMs might even choose to make these improved powers a boon granted to clerics who reach a certain level. While the feat and magic item options allow these new powers to be incorporated into an existing campaign, the other options are best if presented to characters at the start of a campaign.

Feat: The ability to use one of the improved powers represents deep devotion and time spent learning about one aspect of a deity. In this case, gaining access to an improved power is best represented by the Improved Power feat (see the Improved Power sidebar). Clerics who take this feat retain both of their granted domain abilities and choose domain spells normally.

Magic Item: Temples have long known the secret of forging special holy symbols that enhance the tie between a cleric and his deity. These rare and valuable magic items bestow the improved granted power while worn (see the Devoted Symbol sidebar). Clerics who wear one of these symbols retain both of their granted domain abilities and chose domain spells normally.

No Turning: Some clerics never give a second thought to undead, as such monsters are outside the ethos of their faiths. These clerics might wish for alternative uses for

IMPROVED POWER

Chose one of your domains. Through your long devotion and hours of study, you have unlocked one of the improved granted powers of that domain.

Prerequisites: Granted power of the same domain as the selected improved granted power.

Benefit: You may use the improved granted power of the chosen domain.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new domain.

by Jake Manley • illustrated by Tomas Giorello

DEVOTED SYMBOL

These rare holy symbols enhance the bond between a cleric and his deity, granting access to one improved granted power. *Devoted symbols* are tied to one specific domain and only grant the power if the wearer already has that domain and is a follower of the same deity. A *devoted symbol* of Vecna tied to the Knowledge domain only grants the divine inspiration ability if the wearer is a cleric of Vecna with the Knowledge domain. *Devoted symbols* are worn around the neck, taking up the amulet slot, and can be used as a holy symbol for the purposes of turning or rebuking undead and as a spell focus.

Moderate divination; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, *divination*; Price 20,000 gp; Weight 1/2 lb.

channeled divine energy. Instead of turning or rebuking undead, these clerics gain one of the improved powers associated with their chosen domains. They still gain both of the standard granted powers and may choose domain spells from either list as normal. The choice to use this option must be made when the first level of cleric is taken. The ability to turn or rebuke undead from other classes is not affected by this choice.

Paladins may elect to use this option as well, but must wait until 4th level to gain an improved power. As with turning undead, a paladin's effective level for these powers is that of a cleric three levels lower. A paladin must chose one of the domains associated with her deity, and if she has cleric levels the improved power must be from one of her chosen domains. A paladin with cleric levels cannot gain both improved powers through sacrificing the ability to turn undead from both classes. The choice to use this option must be made when the fourth level of paladin is taken.

One Power: Some clerics focus so heavily on one aspect of their deity that they develop powers beyond those of their brethren. Instead of gaining two granted domain powers, these clerics choose one domain and gain the improved granted power instead of either of the standard granted powers. When choosing domain spells, these clerics may choose from both domains as normal. The choice to use this option must be made when the first level of cleric is taken.

IMPROVED POWERS

The following powers represent all of the domains present in the *Player's Handbook*. Other powers are certainly possible for domains from other sources. Unless otherwise noted, activating an improved granted power is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

AIR

Far-Reaching Wind (Su): The touch of your holy symbol imbues a weapon with the essence of air. Air-imbued weapons are guided to their targets by gusts of wind, allowing supernatural accuracy over long distances. While under this effect, ranged weapons have their range increments doubled, and melee weapons may be hurled as thrown weapons with a range increment of 20 feet. Weapons enhanced in this way maintain their increased range for 1 minute. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to your cleric level.

ANIMAL

Totemic Spirit Companion (Sp): You can call upon the spirits of the natural world to aid you as a full-round action. This functions just like the spell *summon nature's ally I* using your cleric level as the caster level. All creatures summoned in this way have either the celestial or fiendish template as appropriate to the type of energy you channel. You may use this ability once per day for every two cleric levels you possess (miniumum 1). Additional uses of this ability may be expended to summon more powerful creatures, with each additional use spent increasing the spell to the next highest level. For example, a 6th-level cleric could use this ability to cast *summon nature's ally I* three times per day or *summon nature's ally III* once per day (or any other combination).

CHAOS

Chaos Curse (Su): A forking beam of multicolored light springs from your outstretched finger and strikes an enemy within 60 feet as a ranged touch attack. If your target fails a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 your cleric level + your Charisma modifier), it becomes stricken with random misfortune for 1 minute. Each round, the target has a 50% chance to drop what it is holding (if holding anything) or to provoke an attack of opportunity (if threatened and not holding anything). If neither condition applies, it falls prone. You may use this ability once per day for every two cleric levels you possess (miniumum 1).

DEATH

Call of the Grave (Su): Creatures near you feel the inevitability of death and resist attempts to keep them among the living. When activated, all conjuration spells of the healing subschool cast within 30 feet of you heal half as much damage as normal. In addition, spells that restore life, such as *raise dead*, *reincarnate*, and *resurrection* do not function when cast within 30 feet of you. You may use this ability 1 round per day per cleric level you possess. These rounds need not be consecutive.

DESTRUCTION

Shattering Blow (Su): You may, as a free action, infuse your attacks with the destructive force of entropy for 1 round. While under this effect, your natural attacks and all weapons you use in melee are treated as adamantine for the purposes of bypassing damage reduction and object hardness. You may use this ability 1 round per day per cleric level you possess and these rounds need not be consecutive.

EARTH

Tremor Step (Su): While standing on a solid, natural surface (caves or fields would both work; the upper floors of a tower would not) you may strike the earth to produce highly localized seismic vibrations. All creatures except you standing on the ground within 20 feet of you must make Balance checks (DC 10 + 1/2 your cleric level + your Charisma modifier) or fall prone. You may use this ability once per day for every two cleric levels you possess (miniumum 1).

EVIL

Torture Strike (Su): One living creature touched (requiring a successful melee touch attack) is wracked by agonizing pain, as if a branding iron had struck bare flesh. You gain a bonus on Intimidate checks against an affected creature equal to your cleric level for 1 minute. In addition, the target creature also takes 1d4 points of Strength damage and is nauseated for 1 round. A successful Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 your cleric level + your Charisma modifier) reduces the condition to sickened and negates the Strength damage. You may use this ability once per day for every two cleric levels you possess (miniumum 1).

FIRE

Flame-Guiding Song (Su): Your voice has a hypnotic power over fire. You can cause flames to lash out at those nearby, attacking one

foe within 10 feet of an existing blaze. These hungry flames deal 2d6 points of fire damage and might cause the target to catch fire. The Reflex save DC to avoid catching on fire or to extinguish these flames equals 10 + 1/2 your cleric level + your Charisma modifier. You may also use this ability to automatically extinguish nonmagical fires no larger than a bonfire. You may use this ability once per day for every two cleric levels you possess (miniumum 1).

GOOD

Saving Grace (Su): You can grant a divine boon to your allies, assisting them in their endeavors. You can bestow this boon upon an ally within 30 feet as a move action. This boon grants a sacred bonus equal to your Charisma modifier on the next saving throw, attack roll, or skill or ability check he attempts within the next minute. You may use this ability once per day for every two cleric levels you possess (miniumum 1).

HEALING

Healing Light (Su): You may channel divine energy as a free action to enhance a spell of the healing subschool. When using this ability, such spells with a range of touch may be cast with a range of close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels). You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to your cleric level.

KNOWLEDGE

Divine Inspiration (Su): You can glimpse into the mind of your deity, granting you unsurpassed powers of recall and intuition. You can channel divine energy to take 10 on any Knowledge skill check as if you had ranks in it, even if you are untrained, as a free action. You may add your Charisma bonus to the check in addition to your Intelligence bonus. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to you cleric level.

LAW

Zone of Enforced Order (Su): You can emit an aura that makes chaotic creatures uncomfortable. When in effect, all chaotic creatures within 30 feet of you take a –2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks. You may use this ability 1 round per day per cleric level you possess. These rounds need not be consecutive.

LUCK

Charmed Existence (Su): You may, as an immediate action, use this ability to gain a +2 luck bonus on an attack roll, saving throw, skill check, or ability check. You must decide to use this ability before you roll and may only use this ability once per round. You may use this ability once per day for every two cleric levels you possess (miniumum 1).

MAGIC

Power Magical Device (Su): You can channel divine energy through a wand, staff, or other charged magical item, powering it with faith rather than the item's own internal reserves. Doing so requires only as much time as is required to activate the item normally (typically a standard action). The magic item produces all its normal effects, but no charge is drained. To power an item, your caster level must be at least equal to the caster level of the item. You cannot use this ability to duplicate spells with an XP or costly material component. Abilities that require multiple charges require you to spend an equal number of uses of this ability. You may use this ability once per day for every two cleric levels you possess (miniumum 1).

PROTECTION

Shield of the Martyr (Su): You can prevent harm to others at the cost of your own safety. Whenever an ally within 30 feet takes damage, you can channel divine energy as an immediate action to split the wounds between the target and yourself (each taking half damage; if an odd number you take the extra point of damage). This ability can only be used once per round and only against a single damage source. You may use this ability once per day for every two cleric levels you possess (miniumum 1).

STRENGTH

Tremendous Might (Su): You can channel divine power into feats of truly superhuman might. You may add a +6 morale bonus on any Strength-based skill check or Strength check required to break, lift, drag, or push on object. This does not apply to attack or damage rolls, including grapple, sunder, or bull rush attempts. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to your cleric level.

SUN

Vengeance of Day (Su): Rays of light brighter than the noon sun burst from your raised holy symbol. All within a 30 foot cone must make Will saves (DC 10 + 1/2 your cleric level + your Charisma modifier) or be dazzled for a number of rounds equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1 round). Undead and creatures with light blindness or light sensitivity, such as kobolds or drow, are blinded instead on a failed save. You may use this ability once per day for every two cleric levels you possess (miniumum 1).

TRAVEL

Second Wind (Su): You touch your holy symbol to a creature, imbuing it with renewed vigor for travel and great speed. You can remove the fatigued condition or make an exhausted creature merely fatigued. If the target creature has neither of these conditions, this ability instead increases the creature's base speed by +30 feet for 1 round. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to your cleric level.

TRICKERY

Miraculous Deception (Su): You can channel divine power to improve the skills you naturally develop in service of your trickster deity. Using this ability grants you a +4 divine bonus on a single Bluff, Disguise, or Hide skill check. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to your cleric level.

WAR

Piercing Steel Talon (Su): When wielding your deity's chosen weapon, you can channel divine energy into a single deadly blow. You instinctively attack the weakest points of your target's defenses, allowing you to, as a free action, ignore either the target's armor or shield bonus to AC for a single attack. You may use this ability once per day for every two cleric levels you possess (miniumum 1), but no more than once per round.

WATER

Waves Protect Their Own (Su): When at least waist deep in water, you can summon a vortex of swift currents and crashing waves to aid your allies and buffet your enemies. Allies within 30 feet suffer no penalties for underwater combat (as if under a *freedom of movement* effect) and suffer no risk of drowning in even the roughest seas (although if they choose to dive below the waves they can hold their breath no longer than normal). Enemies in the area take a penalty on attack rolls equal to your Charisma modifier due to the impeding flow of the water (having a swim speed does not negate this penalty, although a *freedom of movement* effect does). You may use this ability 1 round per day per cleric level you possess. These rounds need not be consecutive.

CHOOSING A DOMAIN

Which domain's improved granted power you pick reflects a great deal about your character's interests and role in the world. For example, a cleric of Ehlonna taking the totemic spirit companion power might be fiercely independent, since her power allows her to summon aid when traveling solo in the wild. A different cleric of the same deity who instead selects saving grace would probably be more social, since that power functions best with numerous allies. The powers taken frequently by others in your character's religious organization impacts how that organization is perceived. A group of clerics with the shattering blow (Destruction) power has uneasy relations with those valuing the integrity of their property, but such a group would be the first called upon to stop an iron golem gone berserk.

FULL FRONTAL NERDITY by Aaron Williams
YOU FACE TWO MASSIVE IRON DOORS. EACH HAS A LARGE KEYHOLE IN THE CENTER.
I'LL HAVE SLEGG, MY THIEF COHORT, SEARCH THE DOORS.
WHY BOTHER? SLEGG CAN'T EVEN FIND THE FLOOR IF HE FALLS DOWN.
TWENTY! HA!
HE HAS TO HAVE SEEN SOMETHING.
BELOW A LOOSE FLAGSTONE, YOU FIND A KEYHOLE.
PICK THE LOCK, DUDE!
ROLLING!
1
SLEGG BARELY HAS TIME TO UTTER A PROFANITY AS HE'S CRUSHED BY A TWO TON BLOCK OF GRANITE. EVERYONE ROLL A REFLEX SAVE TO AVOID BEING BATHED IN THIEF GUTS.
AND BALANCE IS RESTORED TO THE UNIVERSE.
I PULL OUT MY SPATULA OF CORPSE RETRIEVAL...
http://www.nodwick.com
OKAY, LET'S GET STARTED.
LET ME GET THE OL' DICE PILE READY...
AIIEEE! IT'S BACK! THE DIE THAT WAS DEAD AND ONLY ROLLED ONES HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE! I'M HAUNTED! HAUNTED, I SAY!!
OKAY, WHO DUG UP THE DIE?
I CONFESS. I GREW HANDS, WENT INTO THE BACK YARD...
I'D LOVE TO TAKE CREDIT. THAT WAS AN OLYMPIC-LEVEL FREAKOUT.

Beyond the Pale

six Ways to raise the dead

by Rodney Thompson
illustrated by Tom Fowler

Death is a chilling and usually tragic constant in the lives of all mortals. A person who is vibrant and full of life one day can suddenly be gone the next. Most mortals fear death to some degree, either because it forces them to face the unknown or because it takes them away from their loved ones or great works. A person's death often deeply affects those who knew her well, and even casual acquaintances or total strangers might mourn a person's death for weeks. Death is the end of the line, the final chapter in life, the first step on a new path into the afterlife. Death is permanent and eternal.

Except in Dungeons & Dragons.

With the abundance of spells like *raise dead* and *resurrection*, death ceases to become a tragic, soul-searching event and simply becomes a nuisance. A character's death is usually no more than a stumbling block requiring a trip back to town and the hiring a cleric. For the deceased, death usually causes little more than the frustration of facing level loss, causing her to lag behind her comrades. Moreover, it becomes more and more difficult to decisively defeat a villain, especially one with an experienced cleric at his side, as a vanquished foe can often reappear thanks to powerful magic. Since one of the cornerstones of fantasy roleplaying is the ability to do the impossible, bringing a character back from the dead is perfectly appropriate given the extent and power of magic.

Yet these spells and abilities can also cheapen death, a major event not only in the lives of all people, but also in storytelling. When the ability to raise a character from the dead is present, death ceases to have any dramatic or storytelling value. Such power transforms tragedy into a matter of economics. Why mourn the king's assassination or honor a paladin's noble sacrifice when their faithful clerics can simply bring them back to life? Moreover, evil characters can avert their punishments in the afterlife by remaining alive for as long as possible. Granted, most of the spells that bring characters back from the dead have expensive material components, but even mid-level parties can often pool their resources and sell a magic item or two in order to avert the natural process of life and death. These are but a few examples of how magical resuscitation devalues death and—by extension—life, leaving many DMs seeking alternatives.

Keepers of the Dead

One of the simplest ways to make death more serious without drastically altering the conditions of *raise dead* (and its relatives) is to limit those who have access to it. Rather than granting the ability to clerics of any deity, perhaps only death-related deities can grant *raise dead*. Most of *raise dead's* related spells already specify that the target's spirit must be willing to return to the body, so in addition to this caveat simply add that the deity of death must be willing to release the soul. This might mean only clerics of the death deity can bring people back from the dead or that followers of other deities must say special prayers or perform certain rituals before their deities grant such spells.

This variant gives worshipers of the deity of death immense sway over the party. Adventurers quickly find themselves indebted to the death worshipers, especially in a particularly lethal campaign, and any PC who worships such a deity becomes even more valued. The political influence of the death clergy increases drastically as well, as nobles and government officials who rely on such spells for their own safety suddenly find themselves at the mercy of a single church. With assassins and political enemies lurking around every corner, such a figure must be careful to have a friendly contact within the church in order to ensure that death is no more than a passing phase.

A DM might expand this alteration by prohibiting clerics from preparing such spells ahead of time, "just in case" someone in the party dies. In such cases, gaining access to *raise dead* (or a related spell) occurs only after someone has died, making each such spell's preparation unique to the dead person.

The DM can further limit which members of the church have access to *raise dead* spells by requiring a feat to cast them. In that situation, only high-level clerics can gain access to

Coveted Scrolls

One other common means of raising the dead is to obtain scrolls with the relevant spells scribed on them. While this makes it easier for the party to resurrect one of its own members, it also bypasses many of the variants presented in this article. Rather than banning scrolls containing resurrection magic, one way to make the scrolls more rare and less frequently used is to treat each as a holy item the church vigilantly guards. After all, a scroll that can bring someone back from the dead not only consumes a massive amount of divine energy but also alters the natural cycle of life and death. As such, these scrolls are highly prized by the faiths that possess them. To use this variant on scrolls of *resurrection*, triple the market price of the relevant scrolls and have each one marked with the holy symbol of a particular religion, including a warning that tampering with the relics of the church carries dire consequences.

such spells and only at the cost of a feat. Thus, only a few members of any given church can restore life to the dead.

The DM can also rule that the deity of death does not give up souls without getting something in return. In order to create balance in the halls of the dead, a cleric who asks for a life must give a life. To coerce the death deity into allowing a spirit to return to its body the casting cleric must kill a creature of the same type as an additional component of the spell. This variant makes resurrection magic objectionable to some faiths, while others might see it as a solution to the problem of overcrowded jails.

LIFE RESTORER (GENERAL)

You have studied the methods of bringing a person back to life and can draw spirits back from the afterlife.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast divine spells.

Benefit: You may prepare and cast conjuration (healing) spells that return life to the dead. This does not grant the ability to cast these spells before you normally could (for example, it does not grant you access to spells of a higher level than you can cast).

Normal: You cannot prepare or cast spells that make use of life-restoring magic.

EVE OF SPIRITS

Many religions mark holy days when it is said the physical world and the spirit world brush against one another, causing strange phenomena and making it easier to communicate with the dead. This concept translates easily into a *raise dead* variant that does not require any alteration to the spells themselves. In this variant, spells that return the dead to life only function on certain days. The DM sets the frequency of these days, and several simple ways exist to integrate this variant into a campaign. The most extreme example grants only one day a year when the physical world and the spirit world brush against one another, and only on this Eve of Spirits may a character be raised from the dead. Alternatively, four times a year (on the equinoxes and the solstices) a bridge between the physical world and spirit world forms, creating a passageway by which spirits can return to life if summoned by the appropriate spell. These two examples illustrate the most extreme version of this concept. In order to prevent a character and her player from sitting out several sessions or adventures an Eve of Spirits should fall at least once per month at its rarest or as common as once per week. The restriction might only go so far as to designate a single hour of the day (typically the hour after midnight) as the time when a soul can make the journey back to its body.

Instead of a connection between worlds, this limitation might come into play by the dictate of deities, such as a goddess of the moon only granting such spells on the day of the first full moon of each month. Different deities, then, would grant the ability to bring back the dead on different days. Some churches might have strict rules and doctrine that only allow characters to be raised from the dead on particular days.

This alters the campaign setting in two significant ways. First, it imposes delays on adventuring, creating forced downtime when someone dies. This gives other characters a chance to heal their wounds, purchase new equipment, craft magic items, or perform research before plunging back into the adventure. On time-sensitive adventures, though, this variant can significantly impede the party's ability to succeed and presents a difficult conundrum: does the party sacrifice its goals waiting on a comrade's resurrection, or does it forge on in an obviously weakened state? Second, this makes it very difficult to use the *raise dead* spell, as it has a much shorter window of opportunity during which a character can be raised. If the DM chooses to use this option, even high-level spellcasters might be unable to return someone to life with *raise dead* on the Eve of Spirits, as too much time may have passed. In that case, the DM should combine this variant with the resuscitate variant (see the Resuscitate section for more options).

If the DM chooses to use the variant that creates a connection between the physical and spirit worlds, he might also wish to emphasize the importance and gravity of the day by introducing certain phenomena resulting from the connection between worlds. Once every hour on a day where the barrier between worlds is weakened, the DM should roll 1d10 and consult the Spiritual Phenomena chart for an effect witnessed by members of the party.

SPIRITUAL PHENOMENON

1d10	Effect
1–3	No phenomenon occurs.
4	Windows and loose objects, such as tables, chairs, and other small items, shake and rattle for 2 rounds.
5	The air grows chilly (in warm environments), or eerily hot (in cold environments).
6	A ghostly, invisible finger writes a message in nearby dust or dirt.
7	Faint wailing, cackling, or moaning seems to drift through the air for 2 rounds.
8	A random party member feels a spectral hand on his shoulder, but no hand is visible.
9	An unattended small object rises, floats 5 feet in a random direction, and then drops to the ground.
10	A ghostly person appears and takes three steps before disappearing again.

Land of the Dead

Many cultures have an actual realm of the dead where spirits spend their afterlives. Adopting this concept allows the DM to rule that characters can only be returned from the dead in certain locations. A rift might exist in the world that connects directly to the plane where the dead reside, and only by casting life-restoring spells at that location can a character be raised or resurrected. Perhaps several of these rifts exist, with various temples standing at such locations to gain sole proprietorship of the links between the living and the dead. In such a setting, a campaign might revolve around finding new rifts and seizing them, while devoted followers fight religious wars over territories where the dead can return. Alternatively, a cleric might only be able to cast *raise dead* or *resurrection* on ground consecrated by powerful members of their church. Regardless of the reason for the limitation, player characters in a world using this variant must travel to specific locations—often a temple or site guarded by one—to have a fallen comrade raised from the dead. Limiting *raise dead* and related spells to specific locations opens up many adventure options, particularly when unfriendly forces occupy those locations.

This particular variant creates numerous adventuring options. Having a character brought back to life can easily become the focus of a site-based adventure. Rather than seeking treasure or experience points, the party has a vested interest in plumbing the depths of a sunken temple that guards a rift to the land of the dead. Alternatively, entire plotlines can arise from location-based resurrection requirements. If the royalty of one nation has relied for years on its ownership of a *resurrection* locale and a rival nation seizes it, a bloody conflict ensues, with the winning nation gaining access to a place that can bring its fallen soldiers back to life. For adventurers, this option also means planning very carefully before taking a character to be resurrected. If the party cannot trust the people in possession of a *resurrection* locale it must decide whether to fight its way inside or simply spend more time seeking out alternative locations.

A *resurrection* locale acts as a one-way portal between the land of the dead and the mortal world. Most of the time, this allows a soul to travel through the rift when summoned by a *raise dead*, *resurrection*, or similar spell. The DM might wish to introduce another optional rule to the variant: Each time a particular location is used to raise or resurrect someone, there is a cumulative 5% chance that another—usually malevolent—spirit chosen by the DM also passes through the portal into the world of the living. At dawn each day this chance resets to 5%. When a secondary spirit passes through the portal, a slim chance exists that it returns to life. Otherwise, it becomes a ghost of the same alignment it had in life and likely comes back to the world of the living by possessing the body of the character meant to be returned to life. A *true resurrection* spell grants a 25% chance that the secondary spirit also *resurrects* in the same fashion as the intended spirit. All other life-returning spells, requiring at least a small portion of the creature's original body, can only create a ghost.

Mark of Passing

If placing limitations on *raising* or *resurrecting* spells does not fit within your campaign, you can create secondary effects (beyond level loss) that affect anyone who returns to life. For example, a creature brought back from the dead might bear an irremovable mark that manifests upon the character. This mark indicates that the character is alive through unnatural means. In most cases, a visible mark of

Loosening Restrictions

The goal of playing D&D is to have fun, but waiting for several hours (or worse, several sessions) while your friends search for ways to bring back your beloved character is not fun. While many of the alternatives in this article provide options for loosening the restrictions a little to allow for more fun, a couple more general options exist for allowing players to find ways around the limitations. With these options, characters can be brought back to life as normal, but suffer drawbacks until the requirements of the variant being used are met.

Foot in the Grave

A character returned to life, without meeting the variant's requirements, still has a foot in the grave, with part of his soul inhabiting his body and part of it trapped within the afterworld. While in this condition the character is emotionless and distant, rarely speaks, is always considered fatigued, and if reduced to negative hit points loses 2 hit points per round to bleeding (instead of the normal 1 per round). The character remains in this condition until he meets the requirements of the resurrection variant in use. For example, a character living in a world that uses the keepers of the dead variant remains with one foot in the grave until he can find a cleric of the deity of death and have that cleric complete a ritual to finish his return to life. In such a world, any cleric could prepare *raise dead* or *resurrection*, but any character she brought back to life would keep a foot in the grave until he could meet with a cleric of the death deity.

Stagnant

The character returned to life seems back to normal at first, but only over time do his comrades notice a difference in the way he acts. A character returned to life does not grow, learn, or change. His short-term memory seems heavily impaired and he falls easily into repetition. He repeats phrases and nervous actions, prepares the same spells every day, and cannot gain XP. The character remains in this condition until he meets the requirements of the resurrection variant in use. For example, a character living in a world that uses the Eve of Spirits variant remains stagnant until the day when the spirit world and physical world come together. In such a world, a cleric could return a character to life on any day, but unless that character comes back to life on the Eve of Spirits he stays the same as he was when brought back until the next Eve of Spirits.

passing appears as a large tattoo or birthmark on the face, chest, or palms of the hands. Such a mark of passing is often enough to cause the character to be ostracized and rejected, and the more superstitious members of a society might even consider the character to be as vile as the undead. Any character with a mark of passing automatically takes a –2 penalty on Charisma-based skill checks made against characters who consider *resurrection* unnatural.

The DM might make these marks more a taboo than an actual result of returning from the dead. In such a case, the marks do not appear as part of the process of having the soul returned to its body, but instead are the result of a kind of tagging used by members of the clergy to identify those they have brought back from the dead. *Polymorph* spells do not remove the mark (they simply appear on the character's new form), although a *shapechange* spell can hide an obvious mark of passing.

A variant on this idea is to have a ghost or other vengeful spirit haunt a creature brought back to life in this way. This haunting might be automatic, so that every creature returned to life is haunted by the ghost of a loved one, enemy, or jealous stranger. The DM might also rule that only a percentage must suffer a haunting. The chance of being haunted is equal to the returning character's level (after the level loss)×5%. Thus, more powerful souls (high-level characters) have a better chance of drawing the attention of other spirits. You can also reverse this percentage, making lower-level characters more likely to bring another spirit with them back from the dead. How long the haunting lasts is up to the DM, but it might make for an exciting side adventure to try to rid a character of a haunting.

FAMILIAR SOUL

One particularly dangerous variant creates a bond between the character casting the *raising* spell and the character being raised. Essentially, a spellcaster who brings a character back from the dead forges a link between the two of them, acting as an anchor or a beacon for the dead soul to follow from the afterlife back to the world of the living. In doing so, the raised character's soul becomes familiar to the spellcaster, making it easier for the caster to cast spells on that character. If the resurrected character has spell resistance, the spellcaster who raised that character from the dead gains a +5 bonus on caster level checks to overcome the resurrected character's SR. Additionally, the resurrected character takes a –4 penalty on

Fortitude and Will saves against spells cast by the character who performed the *resurrection*. These effects last until the resurrected character dies again, at which point the bond between the two characters is broken. If the dead character is resurrected from the dead once again, the bond is forged once more.

This can lead to significant consequences for characters resurrected by an NPC who is not a staunch ally. The spellcaster who performed the *resurrection* can easily abuse this connection, as it gives the caster great power over the resurrected character. Unscrupulous clerics easily swayed by money or power might suddenly turn on those they brought back from the dead. Moreover, such casters might make extensive use of mind-affecting spells to keep resurrected beings under their control, creating a legion of obedient servants indebted to the caster for their revival. This option should not be taken lightly, as it gives not only political power but also magical power to religions and can put player characters who have been resurrected at a significant disadvantage.

Resuscitate

One very simple variant maintains the power of the *resurrection* and *true resurrection* spells while keeping *raise dead* from falling into common use. Although *raise dead* currently only allows a character to return to life within days of his death, shortening this window of opportunity can make the spell less like bringing a character back to life and more like resuscitating a wounded character on the brink of death. Instead of one day per level of the spellcaster, reduce the time frame during which a character may be raised to 1 hour per caster level from the time of the character's death. *Revivify*, from the *Spell Compendium* and reprinted here, becomes a vitally important spell to characters in campaigns using this variant.

Using this variant puts a lot of pressure on clerics to frequently prepare life restoring spells, or for the party to keep scrolls of such spells handy. Death, then becomes a concern requiring utmost urgency. A party does not have the time to carry a body back to a temple before *raise dead's* time runs out, and in some cases it might not have the time to rest and prepare such spells.

Revivify

Conjuration (Healing)
Level: Cleric 5
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Target: Dead creature touched
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: None; see text
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

The diamonds vaporize form your hand as you cast this spell, and the vapors they give off wrap around your fallen companion, dragging her soul back into her mortal form.

Revivify miraculously restores life to a recently deceased creature. However, the spell must be cast within 1 round of the victim's death. Before the soul of the deceased has completely left the body, this spell halts it journey while repairing some of the damage to the body. This spell functions like *raise dead*, except that the raised creature receives no level loss, no Constitution loss, and no loss of spells. The creature has –1 hit points (but is stable).

Material Component: Diamonds worth at least 1,000 gp.

FULL FRONTAL NERDITY by Aaron Williams
COMPUTER HARDWARE MAKERS SUCK. MY GRANDMA'S COMPUTER NEEDS A NEW HARD DRIVE, AND I CAN'T FIND ONE FOR UNDER A HUNDRED BUCKS BECAUSE NOBODY'S MAKING THE SMALLER ONES ANYMORE.
DEFINE "SMALLER."
http://www.nodwick.com
A HUNDRED GIGS IS THE SMALLEST I CAN GET AND KEEP MY COSTS AROUND A BUCK A GIG. BUT SHE'LL NEVER USE ALL THAT SPACE SO IT'S A WASTE OF MONEY!
YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO FIND HER A HOBBY THAT USES UP ALL THAT HARD DISK CAPACITY.
ONLY ONE HOBBY WILL DO THAT.
YEP. PORN.
I'M NOT TELLING MY GRANDMA TO FILL HER COMPUTER WITH PORN.
IT'S THAT OR SHE'S GOING TO HAVE TO INSTALL A LOT OF MAH-JONGG GAMES.
BESIDES, SOME DRIVES ARE SOLD WITH SMUT PRE-INSTALLED.
I TOLD YOU NOT TO BUY YOUR DATA STORAGE AT A FLEA MARKET.

CORE BELIEFS:

OLIDAMMARA

by Sean K. Reynolds ✦ Illustrated by Andrew Hou ✦ Cartography by Rob Lazzaretti

Olidammara is the bard of the gods, but more in the manner of a stealthy adventuring bard who knows how to have a good time rather than a traditionalist musician. He loves wine, women, and song, but not necessarily in that order. He believes you should reach out and grab life with both hands, that a life without fun isn't worth living, and gold does more good when it's spent than when it's hoarded. Beloved by the common folk, beggars, and jesters, he's also a favorite of adventuring bards, rogues, and anyone living life to its fullest. Of ever-changing appearance and unusual magical abilities, Olidammara lets himself be caught or categorized only long enough for you to feel comfortable, then turns things upside-down and revels in the pandemonium his actions cause. Unafraid to tease Hextor and taunt Nerull, Olidammara is a free spirit with an eye for the finer things in life.

Olidammara, an old deity of festivities and roguish behavior, probably originated among the migrating people but due to his adaptable and personable nature he is now known almost everywhere. He reminds people of the importance of music, fun, and excitement in their lives while simultaneously warning them of the dangers of becoming too attached to material things or rigidly-controlled habits. He epitomizes the likeable scoundrel, the mysterious stranger, the noble thief, and the witty hero.

Olidammara is the patron of thieves and beggars, although his intent is generally not of petty larceny or taking advantage of the poor, but instead gaining wealth from those who can afford to lose it. His is a "rob the rich and give to the poor" sort of philosophy, although often it works out to "rob the rich, throw a party, and invite the poor." He sees measures to prevent thievery as a challenge to his skills, and more than once his need to prove himself in this way has gotten him in trouble. As a god of music he is the favorite of many bards, although overall he prefers music enjoyed by the common people rather than the stiff and formalized tunes used for court occasions. His very presence inspires revelry, and sometimes mortals begin a large party with a prayer to him. He is quick with a joke or a minor trick of prestidigitation to please a child or comely barmaid.

The Laughing Rogue is the god of wine (and other fruity spirits that should be savored), but his area of interest is more in the consumption and appreciation of spirits rather than the growing of grapes and the manufacturing of wine. This (and his love of good food) is still enough to give him an appreciation of nature's gifts; he enjoys playing light music and storytelling in quiet glades and woodlands, although he loves rambunctous city slums just as greatly.

Olidammara was once trapped by the mad archmage Zagig, who forced him into the form of a small carapaced animal as punishment for attempting to steal from his vault. Olidammara eventually managed to escape but somehow retained the ability to create a hard shell around himself when threatened. Somewhat like a turtle shell but with nine ridges instead of interlocking plates, it forms a hemisphere and fuses with the ground, creating a safe place where he can heal or plan an exit. He has used this power many times to escape danger, leaving the shell behind to distract enemies (who often attack it, thinking he's still inside) as he teleports away. He even used the carapace when he returned to loot Zagig's treasury.

Olidammara's natural appearance is a young man of medium height, with a slender build, olive skin, merry green eyes, chestnut hair, and a rakish beard. He typically wears high leather buskins, cloth pants, a leather vest, and an ornate ring. In addition, he has a magic mask that lets him change his appearance and often disguises himself to look like a tinker or peddler, a fop, a young mercenary, or a fat merchant—but rarely anyone who is old. Green and gold are his favorite colors, and he likes to use one or both of these tones even when disguised. When using his natural appearance or when in a suitable disguise he carries the *kanteel of the oldest*, a lutelike instrument capable of an amazing variety of sounds. The kanteel has many magic powers, including creating illusions and real matter, strange fogs, and projecting emotions. With this artifact

THE BASICS

Olidammara is a chaotic neutral deity and his clerics are chaotic neutral (the majority), chaotic good (a minority), or chaotic evil (a very small number). Olidammara's clerics traditionally wear comfortable clothes, dressing much like rogues and preferring browns and greens but occasionally mixing with black. His symbol is a laughing mask, often friendly but sometimes maniacal. Many of his clerics wear an actual mask as their holy symbol, while others reserve this use for special occasions and instead wear an amulet or large ring with the symbol. His most common nickname is the Laughing Rogue; although he has many other titles and nicknames deriving from his adventures and stories, but they are rarely used outside of his clergy. He wanders the Material Plane incognito, although planar scholars say he has a small realm on the border between Limbo and Ysgard that he rarely visits. His portfolio includes music, revels, wine, rogues, humor, and tricks. His primary worshipers are bards, rogues, entertainers, and beggars, although just about anyone enjoying a feast, party, or celebration may tip a cup in his name. His domains are Chaos, Luck, and Trickery. His favored weapon is the rapier, although at any time he may be carrying just about any weapon common to bards or rogues.

HOLY TEXTS

Olidammara's religion lacks one coherent holy book. Instead, his teachings exist in the form of parables and songs, presented either as a collection or singly. Altogether there are perhaps a hundred documents of this kind, and a church usually has physical record of at least three-fourths of them. Any attempt to codify and unite all the stories (some of which repeat or even contradict each other) goes against the idea that adherence to rigid rules and a reliance on material things prevent people from enjoying life. Among the devout it is said that one of the great things you can experience late in life is hearing a particular story about Olidammara for the first time—this is seen as a simple reward for a long life led in accordance with the god's will, and if the story goes against what they thought the church taught, then in the end the joke is on them. Some traveling storytellers own small illustrated collections of these stories to help entertain children.

APHORISMS

The everyday sayings and adages of the faithful tell a great deal about their beliefs and morals. The samples here are representative of many of the sayings common to bards, clerics, and rogues dedicated to Olidammara.

A cage of gold is still a cage. A man surrounded by valuable things might think he is happy, but if he cannot leave his home for fear of his possessions being stolen, and cannot touch them for fear they might break, he is not actually happy. Take the man's things so he is no longer bound to them and can be free to live as nature intended.

Hoarded gold is no treasure. A man who lives alone with all of his money in a vault is poorer than a penniless man surrounded by merriment. What is the point of money and fine things if you cannot use them to bring you happiness? Better to spend your gold on food, wine, and music than let your mouth, ears, and mind go numb from nothingness.

What is good alone is better with others. Any pleasurable thing is greater when you can share it with someone else. A fine wine is sweeter when raised in toast to a friend. A romantic song is stronger as a duet. A good meal is more savory when shared with a hungry man. A memory is richer when reminiscing with someone who was there.

he has charmed the talismans from demons, built majestic palaces, and conjured bizarre illusions to please crowds of thousands.

There are few temples dedicated to Olidammara, and all of them are in large towns or cities. Many of them are inns or taverns converted into temples, and are easy to find except in lands where his faith is oppressed. While some are designed to have many shadowy areas and focus on his more illicit aspects, others are well-lit like a feasting hall or designed to

enhance musical performances like a theater. Most temples hold little of value as the clerics believe that wealth is better spent than hoarded, but they fight ferociously to protect their sacred spaces from despoilers. Temple worship services include melodious chants, joyous songs, great feasts, and the drinking of wine, brandy, and other fruit-based spirits.

Shrines of Olidammara's faith are far more common than temples and may be found in urban or rural areas. Usually the shrine is just a pile of stones or an outdoor alcove bearing his mark where worshipers can pour an offering of wine or leave a bit of tasty food and a few copper coins. It is not considered an affront to the god for someone truly poor to take these coins, although stories exist of misers being punished for daring to take what is not their due. Because most of his clergy is mobile, they tend to stop at these places, make prayers and blessings, and clean up the site if necessary.

There are many important symbols to the faith but any particular church or worshiper doesn't always use or even recognize all of them. His holy symbol represents his magical disguising mask, and its crazed laughing face represents the need to not take life too seriously. The kanteel represents music and revelry, and in some places a simple sketch of it (sometimes just an oval with lines extending upward to represent the strings) indicates a safehouse or place of rest for followers on the run. Because of his great *ring of protection*, magical devices of this type are favored by those of his church, and many *rings of protection* bear his holy symbol; many of his faith purchase or otherwise acquire such rings as symbols of their faith. Olidammara's actual carapace is rarely used as an icon of the faith, but among his worshipers the number nine (indicating the number of segments of the shell) is seen as a lucky or protective number. In some cases the kanteel symbol and the number 9 are combined (a 9-rune with strings, or a kanteel that looks much like a 9-rune), clerics prefer nine-sided summoning diagrams, and so on. A few odd individuals count themselves lucky if they lose a finger on some caper (leaving them with nine), drawing a parallel between themselves and the god leaving behind a part of himself (his carapace) on an otherwise successful adventure.

The kernel of Olidammara's philosophy is that life should be enjoyed, for a life of misery and boredom is a life wasted. Mortals should laugh, enjoy the company of friends and the playing of music, taste good food, and drink good wine. Although he is not a hedonist and doesn't believe that mortals should be, he knows that a lifetime of meat, fruit, wine, and song is better than a life of bread, water, and silence (unsurprisingly he has no ascetic or monk worshipers). His faithful should treat music as the art it is and strive to be as skilled at it as their patron. People should make jokes and laugh when the joke is on them, and try to avoid misery, temperance, and solemnity, for they are the greatest poisons to the soul. He encourages people to practice occasional mayhem not for its own sake but to add excitement to boring lives and rattle the self-built cages of materialists.

A CLERIC'S ROLE

Olidammara's clerics are an easy-going lot, avoiding serious and gloomy outlooks in both life and art. While they have a well-deserved reputation for being pranksters, that is an oversimplification and they actually spend little time playing jokes on people. Their main focus is making people realize (by talk or by action) that living life is too important to take everything seriously. His clerics are not foolish, however, and they know that a farmer with a sick wife or a merchant about to lose her business aren't in the mood for pratfalls and bawdy songs; a helping hand and some light humor to improve the mood are the appropriate course of action in these circumstances. Among the clerichood, those who cannot sing or at least play an instrument are looked down upon.

Because they like to keep their lives interesting, many clerics of Olidammara become adventurers. This gives them an excuse to travel and meet interesting people, and the lure of incredible wealth is very tempting. Adventuring clerics prefer adventures that suit their religious interests; if given the choice between looting the treasury of a noble's stronghold or

rooting out some pesky orcs, they'll always choose the former. Many clerics multiclass as bards or rogues to gain Hide and Perform as class skills or at least take the Trickery domain (thereby also gaining access to the *disguise self* spell).

The nature of Olidammara's clerics greatly depend on their alignments. Chaotic good clerics use humor and their other skills to improve the lot in life of people who are down on their luck or have been dealt a bad hand. Most of the "rob from the rich and give to the poor" type of clerics are chaotic good. Such a cleric looks at a person and wonders, "What can I do to help them better appreciate what they have so they can get back to enjoying life?" Of all of his clerics, these are the ones most likely to get involved when people are in trouble, but that doesn't mean they're not up for causing a little mayhem when the circumstances warrant it. They prefer happy songs, feasting, and merrymaking.

Olidammara's chaotic neutral clerics don't think of their actions in terms of reducing misery or improving lives. To them it's a matter of whether or not the individual is too dull, unhappy, or mired in attachments to be worth talking to. If the person meets one of these criteria, she is a valid target for intervention, even if she seems content to be in that situation. Olidammara's chaotic neutral clerics see these kinds of people as personal affronts to their belief system, much as how many sun-clerics see necromancers and undead as the antithesis of their own existence. These clerics are also likely to play pranks on someone just because they can, trusting in the Laughing Rogue to make it all work out as a life lesson. They enjoy songs with a scandalous edge, sometimes couched in double meaning so they can be sung in polite company or in the presence of the very person they mock, but are more than happy to join in on a happy ballad or a dirty limerick.

Olidammara's rare chaotic evil clerics are the most likely to act in the name of spite, applying their talents to someone who, in their opinion, needs to be taken down a notch. Whether it's an arrogant lawful cleric who awakens in a seedy bordello, a miserly merchant whose chest of gold splits open while crossing a rushing river, or a pompous noble whose clothes turn to rags at the height of a ball, these clerics excel at tricks that prove to be extremely embarrassing to the target. They think nothing is too sacred to mock in a performance, and more than once have sneaked into a wedding party to sing off-color stories about the "virtues" of the groom and bride.

Most of Olidammara's clerics wander greatly for much of their lives, acting as minstrels, messengers, wandering clerics, or performing other duties that justify their traveling and allow them to put their magic and special interests to good use. On any given day, a traveling cleric of Olidammara might liberate a stolen wine shipment from goblin raiders, steal the treasury of a cruel mayor and use it to get everyone in town drunk, convince a loyal spouse to philander, trade songs with a bard, drive a teetotaler city official out of town, break a few laws just for the fun of it, taunt a paladin, or sing a beast to sleep. As a joke, sometimes his clerics work in the exact sort of jobs that other members of the faith are trying to avoid, swindle, or dodge (such as a caravan guard or working with a less-than-reputable group of mercenaries extracting "tolls" from passing merchants)—and almost invariably when they meet they laugh, step out for a drink, and leave their allies befuddled or enraged. Many of Olidammara's faithful are "on the run" most of the time, evading the wrath of a city official here and a lawful church there, unafraid to enter lands where the state or primary religion is oppressive.

Some clerics remain settled or pick a place to live as they get older, usually in a larger city. Most of these work at their temple, earn a living as a tavern minstrel, teach music, become vintners, and so on. Some of the more roguelike urban clerics end up running the local thieves' guild.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER CORE RELIGIONS

Olidammara is a friendly being and holds no grudges against other deities despite past conflicts where he was caught in the act. As an ages-old but young-feeling god, he knows that things change over time and anger often cools to form fond memories, just as an annoying song

sticks in the mind until it becomes a favorite. Because of this he is sometimes used as a go-between for rival deities not on speaking terms, always fighting the temptation to fiddle with the message before he delivers it.

Although they are often the butt of his jokes, even lawful deities like Hieroneous and Hextor tolerate him because he is so charming and rarely malicious. They might resent his pranks, but in hindsight they usually find ways to appreciate them. He is, of course, famous with other deities of similar chaotic or joking temperament such as Dalt (an ancient god of locks and doors), Garl Glittergold (the ultimate gnome prankster), and Kord (with whom he enjoys a mercurial alliance in the vein of Thor and Loki). Olidammara gets along well with wandering deities such as Fharlanghn and the nature goddess Ehlonna (with whom he shares a love of unspoiled places).

Even Zagyg likes him despite their past run-ins, enjoying Olidammara's embracing of chaos, laughing all the harder when he himself is the target (for more information on Zagyg, see the sidebar in "Core Beliefs: Boccob" in *Dragon* #338). Olidammara's favorite deity is Rudd, whom he sponsored to godhood (see the following sidebar) and whose imprisonment by Zagyg led to his own encounter with the eccentric demigod (see the Myths section).

The only deities he avoids socially are overtly evil and destructive ones such as Erythnul, Iuz, and Nerull—their malevolence is jarring to him despite many overtures of friendship in the past centuries or millennia. Now he contents himself with teasing them gently and in non-damaging ways, such as replacing a high cleric's ceremonial bone staff with a rainstick, painting all of a temple's undead guardians pink, or programming illusions to play rowdy tavern music in the middle of a somber ceremony.

A BARD'S ROLE, A ROGUE'S ROLE

Bards, rogues, and clerics of this faith have similar outlooks, responsibilities, and skill sets. Each acknowledges the other's excellence in one area (music for bards, spells for clerics, and skills for rogues) but understands that in a pinch they can fill in for each other and do a reasonable job at it. Unlike clerics, bards and rogues have no obligation to encourage Olidammara's dogma. Many bards worship him merely as the patron god of music, and many rogues pray to him for luck and guidance when working, whether perpetrating a heist or sneaking into an evil temple to rescue kidnapped children. Bards, clerics, and rogues of this church are happy to sit down over a drink and share stories or songs, parting with no hard feelings despite differing agendas.

HOLIDAYS

To an outsider, it might seem that every day is a holiday for the clerics of Olidammara. To the devout, there is a difference between the common festivals held in the Laughing Rogue's honor and true holy days. Numerous and sometimes unpredictable, these are just a sampling of Olidammara's holidays.

The Great Escape: This festival celebrates the god's escape from Zagyg's magical prison. Held in the spring of each year, it has no fixed date (as the actual anniversary of the event is not known and is unimportant in the grand scheme of things) and usually falls on a Godsday when the weather is pleasant and there are no other significant festivals happening. The faithful throw a huge feast in a

RUDD

Rudd is a human woman who has ascended to godhood with the help of Olidammara. She is the goddess of chance, luck, and skill. She is shown as she appeared in life—a slight but athletic rogue with fair skin, black hair, and form-fitting clothing with a long blue cloak. She was the last of nine demigods to be trapped by the mad archmage Zagig, and it is said that his divine form was particularly lucky while she remained imprisoned. Since her release she has been very active in recruiting more followers, and her church has become very popular among adventurers as well as rogues and gamblers. She is a master of the rapier, never misses with her short bow, and claims the bulls-eye target as her holy symbol.

The temple of Rudd teaches that a person must depend upon skill for success, but that having some luck doesn't hurt. Never count on the longshot, but don't rule out that it might happen, as nothing is impossible. Those most likely to succeed are those who make their own luck, whether at a gaming table or in a duel, especially if they buck the odds with a good dose of expertise. Even those in command of the greatest abilities, however, will have to have to fall back on chance from time to time, and that is when the fools are divided from the heroes.

Rudd's clerics practice games, particularly those that rely heavily on chance or physical skill rather than intellectual ability. They hone their fighting abilities and other tasks that improve with repetition. They work in gambling establishments and schools of fencing and archery. They counsel the novice to continue training and the unlucky to find other interests. Her clerics adventure for the thrill of experience, to prove their ability, to beat the odds, and just for the sake of exploring.

public area, celebrating with song, dance, drink, and a play reenacting Olidammara's capture and escape (the rare followers of Zagyg accept the gentle teasing associated with this event, although they have been known to infiltrate Zagyg's role in the play and improvise the script to great comic effect).

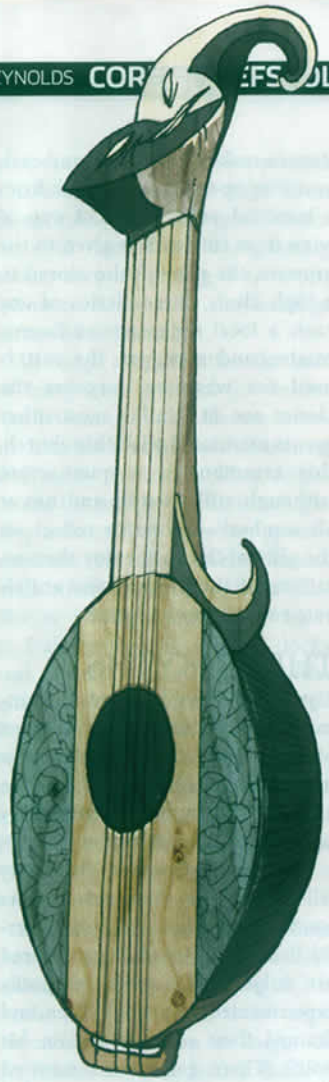
Feast of the Doubling Dare: This holiday takes place shortly after the start of the new year to celebrate past successes and plan for even greater deeds. The holiday is named for an annual contest held by the faithful where they challenge each other to increasingly dangerous, wild, or adventurous tasks. In the contest, one person announces a task (such as "seduce a paladin of Palor" or "steal a hundred gold from Hextor's temple") and anyone who thinks she can do better calls out her own task until someone announces a task that nobody thinks they can beat. If the challenger completes her task, she gains the title of "Hero of the Doubling Dare" for the next year and many social privileges among those of the faith. The contest encourages members of this religion to move about and see more of the world, and not coincidentally brings a bit of friendly chaos into the lives of those who could use it the most.

Taste of a Hundred Years: Every year, clerics of Olidammara's church knowledgeable in winemaking lay down a cask of good wine, and each year they open up such a cask from a hundred years before. A cup of wine from this cask is given to the growers, the people who stored it, a high cleric, three clerics of any rank, a local innkeeper or tavernmaster, and a beggar; the rest is used for whatever purposes the clerics see fit. Unlike most other events associated with this church, this ceremony is a quiet event (although still friendly and not at all somber)—a time to reflect on the gifts of the past, enjoy the sensations of the present, and anticipate rewards in the future.

THREE MYTHS

Myths and legends about Olidammara make up most of the doctrine of the faithful. These stories grow more and more boisterous over the years, eventually being replaced by newer more relevant myths.

The Grand Illusion: This story tells of a country thousands of years ago that was oppressed by a powerful lich. The undead ruler tortured his subjects for sport, magically experimented on their children, and drained their souls to sustain his unlife. Three generations survived this tyranny with all hope crushed out of them by their master's undying will. Olidammara visited them in the guise of a beggar, telling them that the power was within them to reject their misery even as the lich broke their bodies. With the *kanteel of the oldest* he crafted a great illusion that told a story of love, joy, mischief, an evil ruler, and hope, and within every person who saw it there awakened a new flame of zest for life. En masse they cast off their bonds, turned on their undead taskmasters, and rebelled against the king. They eventually forced the lich to flee their lands, although at the cost of many lives—but to them it was worth the price. The moral of this story is that it is better to die free than to live as a slave—whether an actual slave or taken as a metaphor



OLIDAMMARA'S SUMMON MONSTER LIST

As Olidammara is a chaotic deity, his clerics cannot summon lawful creatures with their summoning spells. However, they do have other creatures on their summoning list that are suitable for their ethos (all clerics of Olidammara know the necessary words to summon the following creatures with their *summon monster* spells).

Summon Monster II

Grig* (NG)

Summon Monster IV

Doppelganger* (N)
Ethereal filcher* (N)
Magmin (CN)
Satyr* (CN, without pipes)

Summon Monster VII

Copper dragon* (CG)

Summon Monster VII

Pixie (NG, no special arrows)

** This creature has the extraplanar subtype but otherwise has the normal statistics for a creature of its kind.*

for any circumstance that prevents you from enjoying the gift of life.

Olidammara and the Great Talisman: Once when Olidammara was wandering the planes with his friend Fharlanghn they were attacked by a mysterious fiend only known as the Nameless Demon, a demon so secretive he had managed to conceal his true name from everything in the multiverse. While Fharlanghn suggested the two of them quickly depart, not seeing the point in a long, drawn-out fight with a demon, the Laughing Rogue held up a hand to stay him, then drew the *kanteel of the oldest* and played a song so beautiful and moving that it brought the blackhearted demon to tears. Unbeknownst to the Nameless Demon, the god had used the song as a pretext for divining a vision of the demon's entire past, and Olidammara then knew the demon's name. Armed with this knowledge, the god coerced the demon to give up its talisman in exchange for Olidammara's oath to never reveal the creature's name. The faithful use this story to teach that a way exists to overcome every challenge if you only have the wisdom and tools to find it.

Zagig and the Carapace: Olidammara was walking the earth when he sensed the presence of powerful magic set aside by the mad archmage Zagig. The Laughing Rogue decided to pilfer some of this treasure to teach Zagig a lesson, not knowing that the archmage was working an incredible plan to make himself a god using nine bound demigods as catalysts and sources of power. Olidammara was surprised to find his protégé Rudd (see sidebar) as one of the trapped victims and battled Zagig to free her. Zagig somehow managed to overcome Olidammara by transforming him into the shape of a small, shelled animal and imprisoning him. The Laughing Rogue turned this trap to his advantage and managed to escape, returning later to loot Zagig's treasury anyway, and retaining the ability to create a protective carapace which he leaves behind to confuse and distract his enemies. The lesson of this story is that even against stacked odds it is possible to achieve victory and even come out with an advantage. Admitting defeat is giving up hope and the first step toward a miserable, lonely end.

PRESTIGE CLASS SUGGESTIONS

The most common prestige classes for followers of Olidammara are those that enhance their ability to liberate loot from its current owner, such as the hoardstealer (*Draconomicon*, page 130), dread pirate (*Complete Adventurer*, page 39), dungeon delver (*Complete Adventurer*, page 42), shadowdancer (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 94), temple raider of Olidammara (*Com-*

plete Divine, page 67), or thief-acrobat (*Complete Adventurer*, page 83). Others focus on trickery, mischief, or music, such as the arcane trickster (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 177), divine prankster (*Races of Stone*, page 107), fochlucan lyrist (*Complete Adventurer*, page 47), seeker of the song (*complete adventurer*, page 56), troubador of stars (*Book of Exalted Deeds*, page 78), or virtuoso (*Complete Adventurer*, page 89).

RELICS OF THE FAITH

As with most worldly possessions, relics in the hands of Olidammara's faithful tend to pass around a great deal. Any of these items might end up in the hands of those devoted to the Laughing Rogue.

Kanteel of the Oldest: Olidammara occasionally lends this artifact to mortals or allows it to be stolen for a time. The *kanteel of the oldest* gives a +5 competence bonus on bardic music checks. Using the instrument's other powers require a minimum number of ranks in the Perform (string instrument) skill. In the hands of a skilled user it can produce the following effects as if cast by a 20th level bard: 1/day—*charm monster* (9 ranks, DC 18), *crushing despair* (9 ranks, DC 18), *fog cloud* (6 ranks), *greater dispel magic* (15 ranks), *heroism* (6 ranks), *legend lore* (12 ranks), *major creation* (12 ranks), *programmed image* (18 ranks), *rage* (6 ranks), *vision* (18 ranks).

Olidammara can call the kanteel to his person at any time, even across planar barriers.

Strong (all schools); CL 20th; Weight 2 lb.

Mask of Imontilo: This theater mask is white with black jewels around the eyes and a goateelike formation of precious stones under the mouth. Created by and named for a clever cleric of Olidammara, the mask acts as a *hat of disguise*, *goggles of night*, and a *cloak of Charisma +6*. With these powers Imontilo charmed his way into the beds and treasure troves of dozens of nobles, including a drow high preistess.

After an unfortunate incident where he was walled up in a dungeon and left to die (at least three poetic compositions tell this story) he had a wizard friend add to it the ability to use *dimension door* and *passwall* once per day (CL 14th). In the decades since Imontilo's disappearance the item has appeared in different hands, usually involved in some caper that is only partially successful. Rumor has it the mask is now cursed, causing the sought-after prize to fall from the wearer's hands at the last minute and leaving only a hollow victory, but the church denies this.

Strong conjuration, illusion, and transmutation; CL 14th; Weight 1 lb.

Spying Eye of Olidammara: This platinum *ring of protection +3* is engraved with the mask-symbol of the Laughing Rogue flanked by a wine bottle on either side. It functions as a *ring of feather falling* and a *ring of improved jumping*. Once per day it can be used to scry a creature as if using the *scrying* spell or create a set of *prying eyes* (DC 14, CL 10th).

The ring actually began as a luxury item for Vax the Valorous, an adventurer turned bandit turned innkeeper who wanted easy access to the comforts of life. It has two non-combat features that function automatically and at will—any liquid drunk with the hand wearing the ring tastes like fine wine, and any food eaten with that hand (whether directly or with a utensil) tastes excellent, defaulting to something appropriate for the temperature and texture of what is being eaten. This pair of abilities allows the wearer to drink foul water and eat spoiled meat, clods of dirt, or even the gruel made by *Murlynd's spoon* with a smile on his face (although the ring does not make the substance safe to eat in any way). When Vax died he left the ring for his son, Tellik, who became a bard and traveled much of the world. After Tellik's death in a mountainous dungeon his friends brought his body back to the Olidammaran temple in a nearby city and donated his equipment to the temple. Since that time, the ring has been a legacy item of the church, whose members have added various other abilities over the years.

Moderate divination and transmutation; CL 10th; Weight —.

NEW DIVINE SPELLS

The faithful of Olidammara have developed few spells over the years, though never through long laborious research. More often than not, inspiration for a new spell comes when least expected, leading some clerics to believe that they are boons from the Laughing Rogue himself. These spells are later referenced in "The Power of Faith" on page 48 of this issue.

Festival Feast

Conjuration (Creation)
Level: Brd 2/Clr 2 (Olidammara)
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Effect: Food and drink to feed three humans/level for one meal
Duration: 2 or 24 hours; see text

Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

You create a meal of good food, wine, ale, and beer. The food this spell creates smells and tastes wonderful, while being highly nourishing and satisfying to eat. The drinks are tasty but not strong enough to cause intoxication. The food and drink so created decays and becomes inedible within 2 hours if it is not consumed, although it can be kept fresh for 24 hours by casting a *purify food and drink* spell on it.

Olidammara's Bard Spell

Transmutation
Level: Clr 4 (Olidammara)
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: Instantaneous

Casting this spell allows you to prepare and cast a limited number of bard spells as if they were cleric spells. Each casting of *Olidammarra's bard spell* lets you prepare up to three levels of bard spells (these cannot be combined to prepare bard spells higher than 3rd level). A cantrip counts as 1/2 level for this purpose. You may spontaneously convert these prepared bard spells to *cure* or *inflict* spells just as you would any other non-domain spells. These spells are considered divine spells. You use your Wisdom modifier for the DC instead of your Charisma modifier. These bard spells always have a verbal component (either singing or music) just like an actual bard spell. If the bard spell has a material component or XP cost, you must pay that cost when you cast that spell.

Normally you can only prepare common bard spells (those listed in the *Player's Handbook*) with this spell. You may prepare more exotic bard spells (such as unique spells or spells from other books) if you have a scroll of the spell or a bard on hand who knows the spell. Preparing the spell from a scroll reference destroys the scroll, but preparing with the help of a bard does not expend any of the bard's spell slots.

Olidammara's Carapace

Conjuration (Creation)
Level: Clr 5 (Olidammara)
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Effect: 5-foot-radius protective carapace
Duration: Instantaneous and 1 round (see text)
Save: None
Spell Resistance: No

This spell functions like *wall of stone*, except it always forms a 5-foot-radius immobile hemispherical shell around you that fuses with the

floor. The shell is a nine-segmented carapace of some durable organic material (like very thick leather or animal horn) but has the same hardness and hit points as a *wall of stone* spell.

After casting this spell, any time before your next turn you may transport yourself elsewhere as a swift action as if using a *dimension door* spell (you may carry objects or creatures as described in that spell). The carapace remains behind as a distraction (the *dimension door* effect gives no indication to those outside that you are no longer within the carapace). If you do not use this magical escape method by your next turn, the lingering magic fades and you must find some other way to free yourself from the carapace.

NPC CONTACTS FOR CLERICS OF OLIDAMMARA

Players might encounter one of Olidammara's flock in nearly any setting. As many are adventurers themselves, most can be counted on to aid or even accompany groups if the need is sufficient. Outside the dungeon, clerics of the Laughing Rogue are frequently encountered in taverns, performance halls, and anywhere a party takes place.

Trevisk Dabbleflax (CN male gnome bard 3), a follower of Olidammara and Garl Glittergold, is a young wandering minstrel on the lookout for exciting news and people who like to hear songs and stories. Friendly but a bit off-color when he's not performing, Trevisk has friends and relatives in several gnome communities and knows a few good hiding places outside three different major cities. Trevisk is really good at digging up information, whether from local people, an old book, or his own mind. His favorite instrument is a set of silver bells, although he also carries a lute and a hand-drum. He likes practical jokes, especially the kind where the big boor or snob falls face-first in mud or manure.

Trevisk is average height for a gnome, with dark ruddy skin, bright red hair, and matching goatee. He wears traveling clothes when not working but has two brightly-colored outfits for performances, complete with a costume dagger and sword (he also has an all-black outfit with soft-soled boots, but he doesn't let people see that unless he trusts them). His youthful appearance belies years of studying, and he can quote entire plays by rote or retell old stories with twists appropriate to his current audience.

Trevisk is a good contact for low-level PCs who need local information or an additional healer or scout. He makes a good cohort for a mid-level character or an apprentice-type ally for a higher-level PC to recruit. With his skills and bardic knowledge, a cleric PC who is uninterested in doing the dirty work of finding information can put it all on Trevisk, allowing the PC to focus on other things.

Kahari Kellainen (CG male half-elf cleric of Olidammara 5/rogue 2) is the director of the Grand Theater in the Free City. Over 100 years old but still spry and looking young for his age, he is a very cultured individual but doesn't let that stop him from enjoying "low" theater. His greatest concern is a rival theater called the Royal Opera House, a bit of pettiness that mars an otherwise fine dedication to the Laughing Rogue's teachings. His troupe includes several gnomes which secretly belong to the thieves' guild and other criminal organizations.

Kahari is short, with a fair complexion and light-colored eyebrows. He shaves his head and normally wears one of several wigs, some of which are more styled and ridiculous than others. A skilled actor, he brings several disguises with him when he travels and can make himself appear quite different, even taller or feminine. Born and raised in an outlying province, he has lived in the Free City for half a century and knows many secrets about it.

Kahari is a good contact for low-level adventurers who need to talk to a cleric of Olidammara but can't justify why they should be granted audience with a senior temple official. As he and his troupe are mobile (making trips to several large cities each year) he's an easy NPC to have nearby when the PCs need a friendly face, and his Disguise skill allows him to hide PCs in plain sight when they're being hunted.

Alsi Svenits (CN female human bard 4/cleric 9 of Olidammara) is the head of the Chapel of Olidammara in the Free City. She took over the temple less than three years ago, and her cheerful outgoing personality has brought new life and energy to the entire block where the temple is located. Her temple is a simple one-story building with low ceilings, containing nothing of value that isn't owned by one of the half-dozen resident clerics. A recent acquisition (some old songs acquired from a bard who had "found" them in the capital of neighboring kingdom) has forced her to deal with politics far more than she'd like and she is looking forward to resuming her normal activities.

Alsi is tall, with short dark hair and light brown skin. Strong and quick like a wrestler, she is very intelligent and personable, and attractive in an earthy sort of way. She can speak on many subjects and is learned in music, theater, various religions, and strange lore. She is a veteran adventurer and has had her fair share of fighting for her life.

Alsi is a good contact for adventurers in need if information or a relaxing break from a grueling campaign. Although unlikely to travel far from her temple, she is willing to lend her services within the city if she believes it serves Olidammara's will. She uses most payments she receives to throw loud and exciting parties, feasts, and festivals open to the public.

PLANAR ALLY

The most famous servant of Olidammara is Gurz Grep, a gray slaad who stumbled across the god's domain on Limbo's border, opened a treasure room, and left just as the god was making one of his visits. Impressed by the slaad's guts and courage while appreciating the irony of his own treasures being raided, Olidammara made the creature an offer—work for him, gain power, and go beyond the petty squabbles of other slaadi. The creature agreed, and Olidammara transformed the slaad from his original green form to his current form: a wiry gray slaad with an inflatable bullfroglike neck pouch. One of his eyes is metallic blue, the other an amber-gold (which eye is which color changes every few minutes).

Gurz Grep has all the normal abilities of a gray slaad plus a +8 racial bonus on Perform and Sense Motive checks. He can secrete poison through his skin (contact, DC 20 Fortitude save resists, 1d6 Dex/1d6 Dex) that affects creatures that touch him with bare flesh (including biting or swallowing him) but does not affect his own attacks. Gurz Grep is not personable and doesn't particularly like other creatures but is extremely practical when it comes to negotiations, willing to do anything that isn't outright suicide if paid the right price. Because of his abilities and attitude, he is better suited for reconnaissance and combat rather than negotiations, and because of his ability to change shape he can easily blend in as a bodyguard or enforcer where his true appearance would cause panic.

Part of his agreement with Olidammara is that he gets to keep half of the items he is paid, so he usually tries to bargain for things that he can use himself such as defensive items and ranged magical attacks (he also accepts information about other powerful slaadi). Gurz Grep may be hoping to become a slaad lord one day or even (with Olidammara's help) become a godling.

THE POWER OF FAITH

Initiate feats of the core deities

BY JOHN E. LING, JR. AND THE DRAGON STAFF
illustrated by Keiran Yanner

Deities often play an important role in the lives of characters. Celebrants hold festivals in their divine patron's honor, clerics channel their healing power, and the pious perform miracles in their names every day. Some characters might be especially religious, others might only worship when it's convenient, while even others might opt to honor a philosophy rather than a deity. Yet religion equally touches all these different interpretations with its undeniable power.

Among the most devout followers of a deity, there exist pious individuals who epitomize the tenets of their patron deity. They often undergo specific rituals to prove their faith. In return, they receive special powers and spells their deities reserve for only the most faithful.

This article describes the initiate feats for eight deities from the *Player's Handbook* as well as the related spells they grant their most faithful. Each of these feats lists a number of spells that can be added to one of your divine spell lists. No character can have more than one initiate feat, since such a feat presumes a deep level of commitment to a single deity.

CORE INITIATE FEATS

All of the new feats in this article are initiate feats. Initiate feats are gateways to unique spells that deities grant their most faithful servants. While all of these feats require a character to be able to cast divine spells of a specific level and have a patron deity, the DM might add additional campaign-specific requirements. For example, to become an initiate of Boccob, one might have to create a magic item and sanctify it in Boccob's name, research a new spell, or perform a similarly pious act (see "Core Beliefs: Boccob" in DRAGON #338 for more possibilities).

Some of these initiate feats grant access to new spells included later in this article. New spells are marked with an asterisk.

Currently, initiate feats appear for many deities of the FORGOTTEN REALMS pantheon in *Player's Guide to Faerûn* and for EBERRON's druids in the *EBERRON Campaign Setting*.

Initiate of Boccob

Your strong faith in Boccob grants you special powers.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast 3rd-level divine spells; patron deity Boccob.

Benefits: You can make all Knowledge checks untrained. You also cast all divination spells at +1 caster level (this stacks with the bonus provided by the Knowledge domain's granted power).

In addition, you may add the following spells to one of your divine spell lists.

Level	
1st	*Memory Jar**: The target gains a bonus on Knowledge checks.
2nd	*Identify:* Determines properties of magic item.
4th	*Research Aid**: Get assistance when performing research.

Special: *Identify* also appears on the Magic domain spell list. With this feat, you can cast it as a regular cleric spell, not just as a domain spell.

Initiate of Ehlonna

Your strong faith in Ehlonna grants you special powers.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast 3rd-level divine spells; patron deity Ehlonna.

Benefits: Once per day you may cast *pass without trace* upon yourself as a spell-like ability. In addition, add Handle Animal and Survival to the skill list of one of your divine spellcasting classes.

In addition, you may add the following spells to one of your divine spell lists.

Level	
1st	*Longstrider:* Your speed increases by 10 ft.
3rd	*Snare:* Creates a magic booby trap.
4th	*Commune with Nature:* Learn about terrain for 1 mile/level.
8th	*Animal Shapes:* One ally/level polymorphs into chosen animal.

Initiate of Erythnul

Your strong faith in Erythnul grants you special powers.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast 4th-level divine spells; patron deity Erythnul.

Benefits: Any time you kill a creature with a critical hit you gain the benefits of the spell *death knell*. This effect does not function if the critical hit is made as part of a coup de grace. In addition, the creature must be reduced to –10 hp with the critical hit, not merely rendered unconscious.

In addition, you may add the following spells to one of your divine spell lists.

Level	
2nd	*Cause Fear, Greater**: As *cause fear*, but affects creatures up to 15 HD.
5th	*Erythnul's Slaughter**: Doubles critical threat ranges and prevents stabilization.
6th	*Rage, Mass**: As *rage*, but affects one subject/level.

Initiate of Fharlanghn

Your strong faith in Fharlanghn grants you special powers.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast 3rd-level divine spells; patron deity Fharlanghn.

Benefits: Your base land speed increases by +10 feet.

In addition, you may add the following spells to one of your divine spell lists.

Level	
1st	*Alarm:* Wards an area for 2 hours/level.
1st	*Expeditious Retreat:* Your speed increases by 30 ft.
4th	*Dimension Door:* Teleports you a short distance.
7th	*Phase Door:* Creates an invisible passage through wood or stone.

Initiate of Heironeous

Your strong faith in Heironeous grants you special powers.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast 3rd-level divine spells; patron deity Heironeous.

Benefits: When fighting with a longsword, you deal an extra 1d4 points of damage against evil targets; if the target possesses an aura of evil or is an evil-aligned outsider you instead deal 1d6 extra points of damage.

In addition, you may add the following spells to one of your divine spell lists.

Level	Spells
2nd	*Mark of Justice, Lesser**: Designates action that will trigger curse on subject.
3rd	*Bless, Greater**: Allies gain +1 per 4 levels on attack rolls and saves against fear.
4th	*Righteousness of Heironeous**: You deal extra damage against evil targets.

Initiate of Hextor

Your strong faith in Hextor grants you special powers.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast 3rd-level divine spells; patron deity Hextor.

Benefits: When fighting with a flail, you deal an extra 1d4 points of damage against good targets; if the target possesses an aura of good or is a good-aligned outsider you instead deal 1d6 extra points of damage.

In addition, you may add the following spells to one of your divine spell lists.

Level	
2nd	*Scare:* Panics creatures of less than 6 HD.
4th	*Bane, Greater**: Enemies gain –1 per 4 levels on attack rolls and saves against fear.
4th	*Wrath of Hextor**: You deal extra damage against good targets.

Initiate of Kord

Your strong faith in Kord grants you special powers.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast 2nd-level divine spells; patron deity Kord.

Benefits: You get a +4 size modifier on bull rush, disarm, grapple, overrun, sunder, and trip attempts.

In addition, you may add the following spells to one of your divine spell lists.

Level	Spells
1st	*Kord's Power Surge**: Receive a bonus on Strength-based ability checks and skills.
2nd	*Kord's Greeting**: Bonuses for charging double and penalties reduce to half.
4th	*Champion of Kord**: Receive bonuses on acts of strength.

Initiate of Nerull

Your strong faith in Nerull grants you special powers.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast 4th-level divine spells; patron deity Nerull.

Benefits: When using your Death domain granted power, you may roll d8s instead of d6s to determine the damage.

In addition, you may add the following spells to one of your divine spell lists.

Level	Spells
2nd	*Cause Fear, Greater**: As *cause fear*, but affects creatures up to 15 HD.
3rd	*Nerull's Scythe**: You bring a magical scythe into existence.
9th	*Wail of the Banshee:* Kills one creature/level.

Special: *Wail of the banshee* also appears on the Death domain spell list. With this feat, you can cast it as a regular cleric spell, not just a domain spell.

Initiate of Obad-hai

Your strong faith in Obad-Hai grants you special powers.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast 3rd-level divine spells; patron deity Obad-Hai.

Benefits: You can "lose" a prepared spell to spontaneously cast any *summon nature's ally* spell of the same level or lower, just as a druid, in addition to *cure* spells.

In addition, you may add the following spells to one of your divine spell lists.

Level	Spells
1st	*Summer Breezes**: Cools you in uncomfortable environments.
2nd	*Spontaneous Combustion**: Target touched catches fire.
3rd	*Quicksand**: Creates an area of quicksand.
5th	*Waves of Destruction**: Seawater crashes down upon your targets.

Initiate of Olidammara

Your strong faith in Olidammara grants you special powers.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast 2nd-level divine spells; patron deity Olidammara.

Benefit: Add Gather Information, Sleight of Hand, and Tumble to the skill list of one of your divine spellcasting classes.

In addition, you may add the following spells to one of your divine spell lists. These spells appear in "Core Beliefs: Olidammara" on page 32 of this issue.

Level	Spells
1st	*Festival Feast**: Creates delicious food for 3 humans/level.
2nd	*Olidammara's Bard Spell**: You can prepare spells from the bard spell list.
3rd	*Olidammara's Carapace**: Creates a protective shell around you

Initiate of Pelor

Your strong faith in Pelor grants you special powers.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast 3rd-level divine spells; patron deity Pelor.

Benefits: You receive a +2 sacred bonus on turning checks and turning damage rolls.

In addition, you may add the following spells to one of your divine spell lists.

Level	Spells
1st	*True Turning**: You gain bonuses on your next turn undead attempt.
3rd	*Bless, Greater**: Allies gain +1 per 4 levels on attack rolls and saves against fear.
4th	*Immolate the Wicked**: Undead you have turned burst into flames.

Initiate of St. Cuthbert

Your strong faith in St. Cuthbert grants you special powers.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast 3rd-level divine spells; patron deity St. Cuthbert.

Benefits: You can generate the protective ward granted by the Protection domain ability once per day per four cleric levels.

In addition, you may add the following spells to one of your divine spell lists.

Level	
2nd	*Mark of Justice, Lesser**: Designates action that will trigger a curse on the subject.
3rd	*Retributive Strike**: You gain an attack of opportunity when attacked.
7th	*Spell Turning:* Reflects 1d4+6 spell levels back at caster.

Initiate of Vecna

Your strong faith in Vecna grants you special powers.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast 3rd-level divine spells; patron deity Vecna.

Benefits: You can use scrolls, wands, and other devices with spell completion or spell trigger activation as a wizard of your cleric level. For the purpose of using a scroll or other magic device, if you are also a wizard, actual wizard levels and these effective wizard levels stack.

In addition, you may add the following spells to one of your divine spell lists.

Level	Spells
3rd	*Vecna's Courier**: Deliver secrets without fear of having them revealed.
4th	*Arcane Eye:* Invisible floating eye moves 30 ft./level.
6th	*Eyebite:* Target becomes panicked, sickened, and comatose.

Initiate of Wee Jas

Your strong faith in Wee Jas grants you special powers.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast 3rd-level divine spells; patron deity Wee Jas.

Benefits: You can, as a standard action, spend one of your turning attempts to release a wave of energy in a 20-foot radius. If you channel positive energy, this wave deals 1d6 points of damage per two cleric levels you possess to undead creatures. A successful Will save halves this damage (DC = 10 + 1/2 your cleric level + Cha modifier). If you channel negative energy, this wave cures 1d6 points of damage per two cleric levels you possess to undead creatures. Hit points cured in excess a creature's normal hit point total are lost.

In addition, you may add the following spells to one of your divine spell lists.

Level	
2nd	*Disguise Undead:* Changes the appearance of one corporeal undead.
5th	*Magic Jar:* Enables possession of another creature.
6th	*Circle of Death:* Kills 1d4/level HD of creatures.

Deity-Specific Spells

To show their favor, many deities grant their initiates spells symbolic of an aspect of their portfolio or unique to their worship. Unlike most spells, these spells are only available to characters with the related initiate feat or as otherwise noted.

Bane, Greater

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Initiate of Hextor 3

This spell functions like *bane*, except that the penalty is equal to –1 per three caster levels, to a maximum of –5.

Bless, Greater

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Initiate of Heironeous 3, Initiate of Pelor 3

This spell functions like *bless* except that the bonus is equal to +1 per three caster levels, to a maximum of +5.

Cause Fear, Greater

Necromancy [Fear, Mind-Affecting]
Level: Initiate of Nerull 2
Target: One living creature with 15 or fewer HD; see text

This spell is as *cause fear*, except that you can affect one creature whose Hit Dice are equal to or fewer than yours, to a maximum of 15 HD. Creatures with more Hit Dice than you or with 16 or more Hit Dice are immune to this spell.

Champion of Kord

Transmutation
Level: Initiate of Kord 4
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Target: One creature
Duration: 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

Kord empowers the target to perform great acts of strength. The target receives a sacred bonus equal to your caster level (maximum +10) on all bull rush, disarm, grapple, overrun, sunder, and trip attempts. The target receives these bonuses on checks he initiates, as well as those made as a reaction to other creatures.

disguise undead

Illusion (Glamer)
Level: Initiate of Wee Jas 2; sorcerer/wizard 2
Components: V, S, F
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Target: One corporeal undead
Duration: 24 hours
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

You make one undead—including its clothing, armor, weapons, and equipment—look different. You can make it seem 1 foot shorter or taller, thin, fat, or in between. You cannot change the creature's body type. For example, a wight could look human, humanoid, or like any other generally human-shaped bipedal creature. Otherwise, the extent of the apparent change is up to you. You could add or obscure a minor feature, such as a missing eye or general decay, or make it look like an entirely different creature.

The spell does not provide the abilities or mannerisms of the chosen form. It does not alter the perceived tactile (touch) or audible (sound) properties of the undead or its equipment. A battleaxe made to look like a dagger still functions as a battleaxe.

This spell also foils magical means of detecting undead. The subject of *disguise undead* detects as a creature of the type simulated.

Creatures get Will saves to recognize the glamer as an illusion if they interact with the subject (such as by touching the undead and having that not match what they see).

Focus: Occupied cocoon of a death's head moth.

Erythnul's Slaughter

Transmutation
Level: Initiate of Erythnul 5

Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Target: You
Area: 30-ft.-radius emanation around you
Duration: 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

The bloody eye of Erythnul casts its gaze upon the battlefield. The melee weapons of all creatures within 30 feet of you have their threat ranges doubled, as per the spell *keen edge*. This spell affects both enemies and allies alike.

In addition, creatures within the area of effect that are reduced to negative hit points cannot stabilize naturally. These creatures do not roll d% to become stable and automatically lose 1 hit point every round until they die at –10 hit points. A successful Heal check or magical healing can stabilize a creature as normal.

Immolate the Wicked

Evocation [Fire]
Level: Initiate of Pelor 4
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes

Pelor fills your turning checks with holy power. While under the effects of this spell, whenever you successfully turn an undead creature it bursts into flames in addition to being turned. These flames deal 2d6 points of damage per three caster levels, to a maximum of 10d6. Half the damage is fire damage, but the other half results directly from divine power and is therefore not subject to being reduced by resistance to fire-based attacks, such as that granted by *protection from energy (fire)*, *fire shield (chill shield)*, and similar magic.

Kord's Greeting

Transmutation
Level: Initiate of Kord 2
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Target: One creature
Duration: 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

Kord grants his favor to those who recklessly put faith in their own strength. For the duration of this spell, the target gains a +4 bonus on attack rolls while charging, rather than the normal +2. In addition, the target only takes a –1 AC penalty rather than the normal –2.

Kord's Power Surge

Transmutation
Level: Initiate of Kord 1
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Target: One creature
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

Kord temporarily infuses the target with great strength. The target receives an enhancement bonus to its Strength score equal to twice your caster level, maximum +10, that applies only when making skill and ability checks. After the spell expires, the target is fatigued for 1d4 minutes.

Mark of Justice, Lesser

Necromancy
Level: Initiate of Heironeous 2

This spell is identical to *mark of justice* except as indicated here. Choose one of the following three effects:

- –3 decrease to an ability score (minimum 1).
- –2 penalty on attack rolls, saves, ability checks, and skill checks.
- Each round, the target has a 25% chance to take no action; otherwise, it acts normally.

Memory Jar

Transmutation
Level: Initiate of Boccob 1
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Target: One creature
Duration: 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

This spell allows the target to recall bits and pieces of knowledge she might otherwise forget. She receives a +1 competence bonus per two caster levels (maximum +5) on all knowledge-related checks made for the duration of the spell. This includes Knowledge skill checks, bardic knowledge, and similar abilities.

In addition, the target may reroll one Knowledge skill check that it has failed within the last minute.

Nerull's Scythe

Conjuration (Creation)
Level: Initiate of Nerull 3
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 round
Range: 0 ft.
Effect: One scythe
Duration: 1 minute/level (see text)
Saving Throw: No
Spell Resistance: No

You call forth a lesser aspect of Nerull's chosen weapon, "Lifecutter." This +1 *keen scythe* appears in your hands or at your feet (your choice). *Nerull's Scythe* only functions at its full potential for a follower of Nerull. If a non-believer picks up the weapon, it is treated merely as a normal scythe.

Quicksand

Conjuration (Creation) [Earth]
Level: Initiate of Obad-Hai 3
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Area: 5 ft.-radius per 2 levels
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Reflex negates (see text)
Spell Resistance: None

With this spell, you create a patch of quicksand. The surface upon which you cast *quicksand* must be natural—rock, dirt, and so on. Any creature in the area of effect is entitled to a Reflex save to avoid the effects. For information on the effects of quicksand, see page 88 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Rage, Mass

Transmutation
Level: Initiate of Erythnul 6
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5ft./2 levels)
Target: One creature/level, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart

Mass rage works like *rage*, except that it affects multiple creatures.

Research Aid

Transmutation
Level: Initiate of Boccob 4
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 hour
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 day/level

Originally created by a servant of Boccob performing important research, Boccob now grants this spell to his most dedicated clerics. After casting this spell, your mind achieves a level of clarity that permits you to perform research at a faster pace. While this spell is active, you receive the following benefits:

- The casting time of *legend lore* and *identify* is halved.
- You gain a +5 circumstance bonus on Spellcraft checks made to research new spells.
- Only half the normal amount of time is required to research a new spell.
- Crafting magic items takes half the normal amount of time.

Retributive Strike

Abjuration
Level: Initiate of St. Cuthbert 3
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round/level

This spell surrounds you with a flickering silver aura that seems to reach out to those nearby. While in effect, any adjacent opponent who successfully strikes you with a melee weapon provokes an attack of opportunity from you. This spell does not grant you the ability to make additional attacks of opportunity in 1 round. Opponents who take other actions that provoke attacks of opportunity draw them normally from those who threaten them.

Righteousness of Heironeous

Transmutation
Level: Initiate of Heironeous 4
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

Heironeous aids you in defeating those who would do the most evil in the world. For the duration of this spell, you deal 2d4 points of damage against evil targets with your longsword rather than the normal 1d4 granted by the Initiate

of Heironeous feat. If the target is an evil outsider, you instead deal an additional 2d6 points of damage. This bonus damage only applies to attacks made using a longsword.

spontaneous combustion

Evocation [Fire]
Level: Initiate of Obad-Hai 3
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: 1 creature or object
Duration: Instantaneous (see text)
Saving Throw: Yes (see text)
Spell Resistance: Yes

You point at a creature or object, causing white-hot flames to burst from the target. Creatures and attended objects receive a Reflex saving throw to avoid the affect. Objects that are not flammable (such as a stone wall) are unaffected by this spell.

The flames produced by *spontaneous combustion* are much hotter than normal flames. Targets take 3d6 points of fire damage the first round, and 2d6 every subsequent round until the target extinguishes the flames. Creatures can attempt a new Reflex save every round to extinguish the flames. Subjects can opt to spend a full-round action that provokes an attack of opportunity to smother the flames. Doing so grants a +4 bonus on their next Reflex save. Submerging the target completely in water automatically douses the flames. A person can extinguish a burning unattended object as a full-round action that provokes an attack of opportunity.

summer breezes

Conjuration (Creation) [Air]
Level: Initiate of Obad-Hai 1
Components: V, DF
Casting Time: 1 round
Range: Personal
Area: 20-ft.-radius emanating from caster
Duration: 1 hour/level
Saving Throw: No
Spell Resistance: No

This spell conjures forth light, cool breezes around the caster. These breezes make hot environs much more comfortable, reducing the effective temperature within the area of effect by 20 degrees.

In addition, the swirling nature of the winds makes it more difficult for creatures that rely on scent. Within the area of effect, creatures using only the scent ability to target you suffer a 20% miss chance.

true turning

Divination
Level: Initiate of Pelor 1
Components: V, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: See text

Pelor's radiance inspires your holy symbol to the bane of undead. Your next turning check (if it is made before the end of the next round) gains a +4 insight bonus. In addition, you may add your cleric level × 2 (to a maximum of 10) to your turning damage.

vecna's courier

Enchantment [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Initiate of Vecna 4
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 round
Range: Touch
Target: One intelligent creature
Duration: 1 day/level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

Upon casting this spell, you can embed a message of up to 25 words + 1 word per caster level into the target's mind. The target cannot recall the message by any means short of a *limited wish*, *wish*, or *miracle*. When the target hears a predetermined word or phrase, he enters a trance-like state and recites the message word for word—even if he doesn't speak the language the message is in. After delivering the message, the target exits the trance, with no memory of having delivered the secret message.

waves of destruction

Evocation [Water]
Level: Initiate of Obad-Hai 5
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Area: 40 ft. radius
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Reflex half
Spell Resistance: Yes

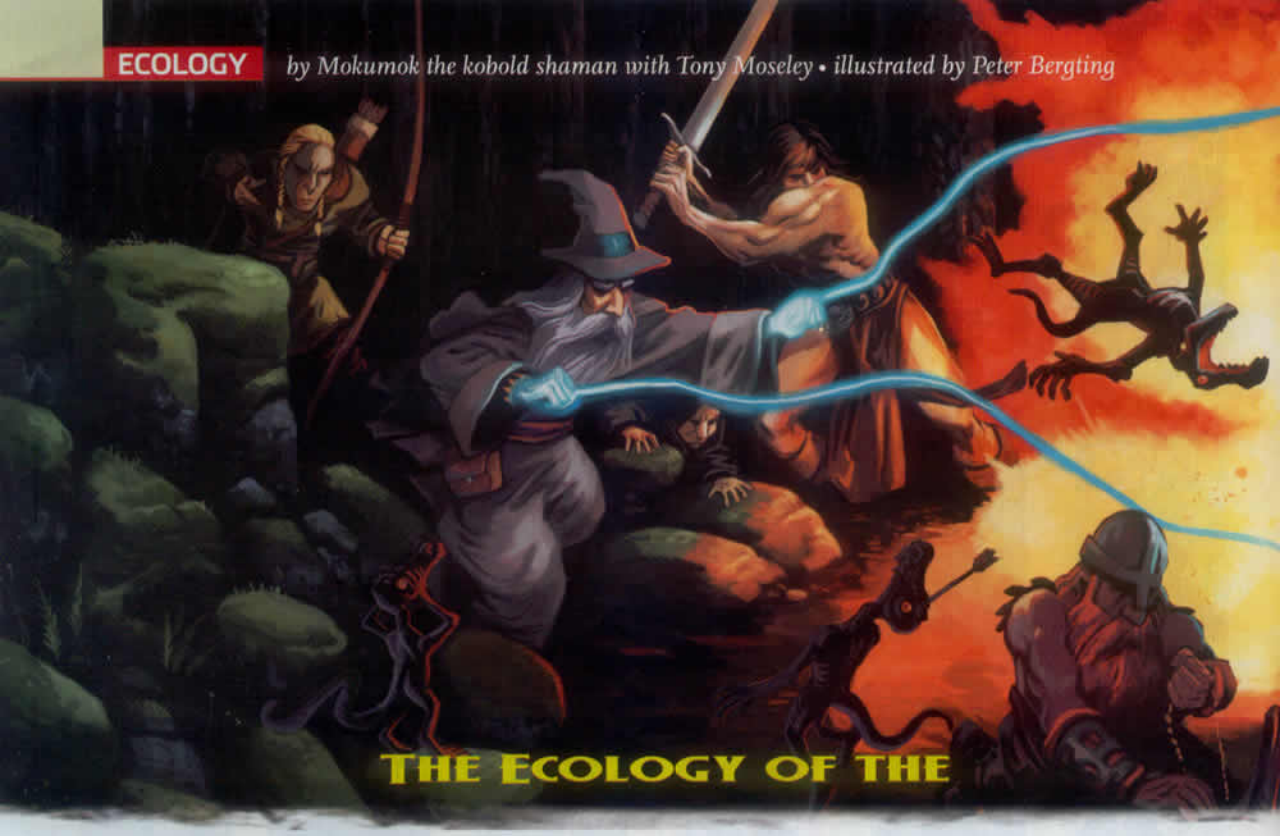
You call forth a large volume of water that batters the area. Salt water crashes down from above, drenching everything within the area of effect that is unprotected. The water automatically extinguishes nonmagical fires, as well as magical flames produced by spells of a lower level. All creatures within the area of effect take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per caster level, to a maximum of 15d6, with a Reflex save for half damage. Creatures with the fire subtype take lethal damage instead.

wrath of hextor

Transmutation
Level: Initiate of Hextor 4
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

Hextor's unholy rage and lust for battle provokes you to destroy those who most inspire his wrath. For the duration of this spell, you deal 2d4 points of damage against good targets with your flail rather than the normal 1d4 granted by the Initiate of Hextor feat. If the target is a good outsider, you instead deal an additional 2d6 points of damage. This bonus damage only applies to attacks made using a flail.

by Mokumok the kobold shaman with Tony Moseley • illustrated by Peter Bergting



THE ECOLOGY OF THE Adventurer

As shaman of my tribe, I have many duties: recording births and deaths, healing the sick and injured, interpreting omens, making spooky jewelry from teeth, restoring the visage of our fearsome god when the paint starts to peel, and supervising potato-sack races. Upon this already massive mound of obligations, our beloved chieftain has piled yet another task: writing ecology reports for illiterate kobolds. Oh joy and bliss. Who needs to sleep? Not me, apparently.

If you, like every other kobold, cannot distinguish a word from a beetle squashed on the page, please come by my office. I own a rare pair of *spectacles of literacy*. You can't borrow them, but you can admire the padlocked silver and electrum chest I keep them in.

HISTORY OF THE CRYPT OF CYSTUS

Our tribe has inhabited the Crypt of Cystus since time immemorial. Similarly, adventurers have been raiding this dungeon since time immemorial minus two days. Luckily, until recently, the raids were restricted to one per year.

When Cystus built this vast, magnificent dungeon, he had the foresight to enchant the front door so that it could only be opened on the ninth day of the eighth month, the anniversary of his divorce from Rita the Rogue, and then only if one knocked three times and shouted, while drunk, "It's me, Rita... the harpy!" This fabulous safeguard kept the number of adventuring parties assaulting this place down to a minimum. Not too shabby, and far fewer than the sixty-something raids the poorly located Tomb of Horrors endures every year. (Cystus, unlike Acererak, felt no need to build his dungeon within walking distance of a bakery.)

By all accounts, until three months ago our tribe was thriving in this massive crypt. I'm not saying there wasn't room for improvement, mind you. There were many routine dangers here, such as wandering monsters and Ponzi schemes. Plus, at least three kobolds bled to death every

day in my waiting room while I took my afternoon nap. And, of course, the annual adventuring party raid. Still, our tribe was thriving and doing pretty well. Much better than now, that's for certain.

As I'm sure you know, Cystus's safeguard was overcome three months ago when an adventurer propped the front door open with a chair. Since then, adventurers of all types have been pouring in: sorcerers, paladins, arcane archers, bards—you name it. They come at the rate of one adventuring party per day, and all of them repeat the same rumor: that Cystus finally succumbed to chronic osteoporosis. Maybe it's true; I don't know. The last time anybody on our level saw Cystus was five years ago, when he came up here looking for his cat. What I do know, however, is that our warriors are being killed by the truckload (to use a popular anachronism I don't understand). Were it not for the hassle of packing and moving what must be dozens of boxes of stuff, I would suggest to the chief that our tribe relocate to a lower, deadlier level where, ironically, we'd be safer.

CHAIR OF PROPPING

When placed against a door, this magical chair prevents the door from opening if the door is closed, or closing if the door is open. The chair can only be removed by the person who placed the chair against the door, or by an interior decorator.

Moderate evocation; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item, *wall of force;* Price 100,000 gp; Weight 3 lb.

So here we are and here we remain, defending our home against adventurers on a daily basis and worrying about the survival of our tribe. Wait, did I say "worrying?" Why should anyone worry? After all, is it even possible for adventurers to destroy a kobold tribe that has survived a millennium in this haunted crypt through determination, courage, and rapid breeding alone? Sorry, I don't have time to answer that question. I'm too busy stamping the chieftain's seal on piles of death certificates.

PSYCHOLOGY OF THE ADVENTURER

Killing kobolds has always been an obsession for adventurers, or at least a really bad habit. Some days it seems a kobold can't place a piece of quartz on a stool without an adventurer slaughtering him, stealing the quartz, and setting fire to the stool. Nonetheless, the true reason that adventurers begin adventuring is not and never has been about kobolds. Adventurers go into dungeons for another reason entirely—and the reason isn't treasure, if that's what you're thinking.

Several years ago, I sneezed while pronouncing the crucial final syllable of a *summon monster I* spell and somehow accidentally teleported myself into a tavern full of adventurers. Several of them promptly beat me into helplessness and dragged me upstairs to a room filled with obviously worthless copper pieces, castoff everyday weapons, and minor magic items. Their leader stared me dead in the eyes and said, "Explain your appearance in this tavern!" I replied, "Pretty much the way I look now, only with less bruises." One of them yanked off the tip of my tail and fed it to me. Swallowing quickly, I boldly asked their leader, "Why do adventurers go into dungeons?" The room became silent. Their leader spent several minutes cogitating,

then smiled and replied, "For fun." So that is the answer, straight from the source. Adventurers go into dungeons for fun. To them, adventuring is a game, it is something they play.

I have divided adventurers into three distinct types, based on their approach to fun. I call these groupings Gamist, Narrativist, and Simulationist. Every adventurer fits cleanly into one of these three categories, without overlap.

GAMIST

Gamist adventurers are the most deadly type of adventurer, as their every thought centers upon destruction and competition. If a gamist fails to kill more creatures in a battle than his companions, he will rip off his own head in humiliation and hurl it against a wall. Gamists are masters of the sword and bow, but are no less formidable when wielding improvised weapons, such as chains, table legs, or bags full of kittens. Unlike other adventurer types, gamists never speak.

NARRATIVIST

Narrativist adventurers are the thinkers in the party and love agonizing over what is right and wrong. Not surprisingly, narrativists are also the easiest to kill. The backpack of a typical narrativist contains a map, a journal, a memento from his dead parents, two or three worn books, a corsage from his junior prom, some letters from the family who raised him, a 30-pound tome of his true family's history, the last twenty-two issues of his favorite magazine, a pair of bronzed baby booties, a library card, receipts, and a miniature globe. Everything that happens to the party is recorded by the narrativist in his journal. The quickest

ADVANCED ADVENTURER

Adventurers distinguish their skill and rank among one another by their number of possessions and the speed at which they kill things. Those with the most treasure, most powerful magics, and largest body counts are called heroes, while those with the least are called cohorts.

MORGAN IRONWOLF **CR 20**

Human barbarian 2, cleric 1, fighter 2, monk 2, paladin 2, ranger 2, rogue 2, sorcerer 4, assassin 1, shadow dancer 2

N Medium humanoid

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *true seeing*; Listen +17, Spot +17

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Infernal, Undercommon

AC 37, touch 14, flat-footed 33; Dodge, Mobility; evasion

hp 232 (20 HD); **DR** 5/evil; fortification 100%

SR 19

Resist acid 30, cold 30, electricity 30, fire 30, sonic 30

Immune mind-affecting effects

Fort +29, **Ref** +26, **Will** +20

Spd 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee +5 *dancing, keen, speed, vorpal, wounding longsword* +23/+23/+18/+13 (1d8+9/17–20); or
Axe of the Dwarvish Lords +24/+19/+14 (1d10+10/19–20/×3; throwing range 10 ft.); or
flurry of blows +17/+17/+12/+7 (1d8+4)

Base Atk +13; **Grp** +21

way to kill a narrativist in battle is to distract him with a question about his background. He will usually stop attacking to explain his coat-of-arms or why he is wearing a carnation in his buttonhole.

SIMULATIONIST

Simulationist adventurers are prepared for anything and never carry less than 200 pounds of gear (not counting armor and weapons). A typical simulationist carries a 10-foot aluminum pole, a comb, a mirror, wolfsbane, garlic, a pound of salt, 400 feet of knotted rope, a bedroll, flannel pajamas, a 15-foot pole, a 7 1/2-foot pole, a favorite pillow, two carrier pigeons, breath mints, a padlock, a first aid kit, a second aid kit, a laminated card naming several people to contact in the event of an emergency, a dog whistle, a canister of lamp oil, a pornographic drawing of an elf maiden, and so forth. Simulationists, being more curious than gamists or narrativists, can sometimes be lured into traps, ambushes, and small obvious cages. For reasons unknown, all simulationists have difficulty speaking in a normal fashion. Instead of saying "I see a chest," for example, they might say, "Verily, a chest!" or "Arrr, there be a chest, says I."

PHYSIOLOGY OF THE ADVENTURER

Although it pains me to admit it, we kobolds have more in common with adventurers than we do with our cryptmates. Have you noticed that ropers, darkmantles, and oozes don't even have laundry? Adventurers, on the other hand, have two eyes, a nose, and lack tentacles—just like all of us (not counting Jimp, of course; sorry about that potion, Jimp). I'm not saying that adventurers are in any way preferable to our crypt-mates, not at all. But at least I can imagine how to go about torturing one.

In many important ways, however, we are extremely different. Consider the adventurer's diet. One might assume each adventurer consumes 900 pounds of raw flesh every day based upon the number of creatures they kill, but this is not the case. Adventurers only eat desiccated rations, which they bring with them. I know this sounds implausible, but trust me, an adventurer has never set foot in a dungeon in search of moist delicious food. My mother has had her kitchen ransacked by adventurers no fewer than eleven times and not once did they even force her to make sandwiches.

Attack Options Cleave, Combat Expertise, favored enemy +2 (humanoid [kobold])[1], Great Cleave, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack

Special Attack death attack (DC 15), flurry of blows, rage 1/day[2], rebuke undead 7/day (+2 on turning checks), smite evil 1/day, sneak attack +2d6, spells, unarmed strike

Combat Gear scroll of *imprisonment*, scroll of *Mordenkainen's disjunction*, scroll of *shapechange*, 2 scrolls of *time stop*

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 2nd):
1st—*disguise self*[D], *doom* (DC 15), *sanctuary* (DC 15)
0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic, light*

D Domain Spell; **Domains** Travel, Trickery

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 5th):
2nd (4/day)—*blur, glitterdust* (DC 16), *scorching ray, web* (DC 16)
1st (7/day)—*charm person* (DC 15), *enlarge person, feather fall, grease, magic missile, shield, true strike*
0 (6/day)—*dancing lights, ghost sound, mage hand, prestidigitation, ray of frost, touch of fatigue* (DC 14)

Abilities Str 18, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 18

SQ aura of good, *detect evil*, divine grace, fast movement, hide in plain sight, lay on hands, poison use, summon familiar (hawk), trapfinding, uncanny dodge, wild empathy (+2 on wild empathy checks)

Feats Cleave, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mobility, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Spring Attack, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting, Whirlwind Attack

Skills Balance +8, Bluff +11, Climb +11 (+13 using rope), Craft (alchemy) +11, Diplomacy +25, Disguise +11 (+13 to act in character), Decipher Script +11, Escape Artist +11 (+13 using rope), Gather Information +8, Handle Animal +11, Hide +16, Intimidate +8, Jump +13, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +11, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +11, Knowledge (geography) +11, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (nature) +13, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +11, Knowledge (religion) +11, Knowledge (the planes) +11, Listen +21, Move Silently +14, Perform (dance) +11, Profession (sailor) +7, Ride +8, Search +11 (+13 involving secret doors), Sense Motive +11, Sleight of Hand +9, Spellcraft +13, Spot +21, Survival +11 (+2 aboveground, underground, on other planes, to avoid getting lost, to avoid hazards, or to follow tracks [permutations stack]), Swim +11, Tumble +20, Use Magic Device +11 (+14 using scrolls or to decipher spells on scrolls), Use Rope +11 (+13 involving bindings)

Possessions combat gear; *+5 greater energy resistance (all), heavy fortification, spell resistance 19, mithral breastplate* (counts as no armor); *+5 lion shield; +5 anarchic, axiomatic, holy, unholy, adamantine, cold iron, silver longsword; +5 dancing, keen, speed, vorpal, wounding longsword; Axe of the Dwarvish Lords; holy avenger;* 50 *greater slaying arrows (all)*; 2 masterwork daggers; *amulet of natural armor*; three *bags of holding* (type V); *carpet of flying* (20 ft. by 20 ft.); *cloak of resistance +5; crystal ball* (with all spells); *cube of force; cubic gate; Daern's instant fortress; eyes of petrification; gloves of swimming and climbing; Hand and Eye of Vecna; helm of brilliance* (disguised as pot); *pale green ioun stone; iridescent spindle ioun stone; mantle of faith; monk's belt; orange ioun stone; orb of storms; stone of luck*; three *portable holes; ring of seven wishes; ring of spell turning*; winged *boots of speed and teleportation*; other gear (see Chapter 7 of the *Player's Handbook*)

Unnamed XXIII, hawk familiar[3]**:** 8 hp; *Monster Manual* 273

[1] Why!? [2] Uggh... you figure it out. [3] Hidden among equipment with the corpses of familiars one through twenty-two.

Because of the numerous dead creatures left in the wake of adventuring parties, scavenging vermin have experienced massive population surges in the crypt. This is becoming a problem, so if you see any vermin breeding, stomp your foot and scare them apart. Currently, I estimate no fewer than two hundred gnomes roaming our corridors.

WEAPONS OF THE ADVENTURER

When not plundering dungeons, adventurers live in taverns on the surface, where they spend their time creating new, deadlier weapons to use in plundering dungeons. Over the years, the swords and arrows of adventurers have become so powerful that kobold warriors have started wearing armor to impress women rather than for any measurable protection. Concerned, our master armorer hammered together a special oaken shield thick enough to deflect at least one blow from their latest super-weapons. Unfortunately, at 23 inches thick, it proved too heavy to lift.

At the rate things are going—the imagination of adventurers being outweighed only by their bloodlust—eventually an adventurer will arrive in our dungeon with a weapon so lethal that it kills any kobold approaching within 30 feet of it. At that moment, we will know the days of our tribe are truly numbered and without hope. Oh wait, never mind. An adventurer brandishing a dagger like that came through last week.

TACTICS OF THE ADVENTURER

Adventurers are resourceful. They flank, sneak attack, levitate their archers above the reach of our swords, throw glass flasks that release eight-headed hydras, cast sonically-substituted *fireballs*, open massive gates into the Lower Planes behind legions of kobolds then scare them into flight with *symbols of fear*, and so on. Their most infuriating tactic, however, is not destructive: it is their application of resurrection magic on their dead. Seriously, that spell infuriates me. I've seen it happen over and over. Wave after wave of kobold warriors stream at an adventuring party until finally we kill one of them, and then tomorrow I see that same adventurer perched on the

statue of the king, prying the rubies out of its eye sockets.

The chief once asked me what kobold warriors can do to counter the tactics of adventurers. All I could come up with was, "Kill themselves to deprive the adventurers of the pleasure." Lucky for me his royal pompousness thought I was joking.

SOME POSITIVE STUFF

Adventurers are a curse upon dungeon dwellers and we must recommit ourselves daily to their swift and merciless destruction before they succeed in eradicating us completely. But let's not go overboard. Adventurers are responsible for several good things, too.

For starters, they cull from the tribe our weak, our sick, and our not-exactly-sick-but-taking-vitamin-B-just-in-case. As a shaman dedicated to keeping the tribe healthy, this certainly lightens my workload.

Furthermore, because so many warriors have died in countless battles over the past few months, the lady kobolds now outnumber the males eleven to one. As tragic as this is from a military perspective, one can't help but notice that even the shortest, ugliest kobold warrior now enjoys at least five adoring wives... and most have far more! Myself, I have attracted thirty-one. I would be the happiest kobold in the tribe were it not for that spiked pit accident a few years back.

One would also be crazy to overlook the benefit of magic items. Adventurers bring these wonders into our shadowy world, not the other way around. The same goes for gold. We all hate adventurers, but whose coins do we use when we want to purchase sausages from the illithids? Not kuo-toa clamshells, that's for sure.

Lastly, I must mention our generous pension plan. I feel morbid saying it, but it remains well-funded only because so few kobolds live long enough to collect.

If you are wondering why I've mentioned benefits derived from our enemy, I don't know. I might have a fever. Or maybe I'm looking for the silver lining in a dark, imposing cloud that hates us and wants to blast us with sonically-substituted, empowered *lightning bolts*.

NEW KOBOLD FEATS

Kobolds might choose a variety of unique feats to aid them in surviving. Unfortunately, they're about as good at choosing feats as they are at surviving. A kobold must have seen adventurers within the past five weeks to qualify for these restricted feats. Dreaming about seeing adventurers shouldn't count, but it does anyway.

Bad Decision

You made a bad decision.

Prerequisite: Kobold.

Benefit: Upon choosing this feat, the kobold experiences an odd, nagging feeling that he did something really stupid. Wasteful, even.

Dying Shriek

You refuse to die quietly.

Prerequisite: Kobold.

Benefit: Popular among kobold prison guards, this feat allows a slaughtered kobold to scream a short phrase upon his sudden, unexpected death. Popular screams are, "The humans have escaped!" and "I told you we should have killed them!"

Special: A kobold fighter can select Dying Shriek as a... nevermind. There are no kobold fighters.

Elf

Better to die as an elf than as a kobold.

Prerequisite: Kobold.

Benefit: Upon selecting this feat, the kobold spontaneously polymorphs into an elf and is immediately killed by nearby kobolds. This feat can only be selected by mistake.

Volunteer

You have a death wish... in addition to being a kobold.

Prerequisite: Kobold.

Benefit: A kobold with this feat boldly volunteers for any mission involving adventurers. Typical missions are, "Sneak into the adventurer's camp and strangle their guard dogs," and "Sneak into the adventurers' camp and smear their wizard with grease so he will be afraid to throw *fireballs* tomorrow." If a kobold survives five years with this feat, his chieftain attempts to memorize his name.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Speaking as a fellow kobold, I'll be as direct as possible. The odds of you dying by adventurer are high. So high, in fact, that if you accidentally drank a quart of poison it would only reduce your chance of dying at the hands of an adventurer by five percent. Despair not, though, and more importantly, complain not, as the king says any dissent undermines the war effort and gives him a headache. So sharpen your gnome-sticker and never forget: We kobolds have battled adventurers since before the dawn of time! We are due for a win.

When you finally meet your foe, roar like a descending dragon and attack him with all the fury of our entire remaining population. If all goes well, you might qualify for a medal. If all doesn't go well, you'll likely find yourself dying on the cold stone floor, one of many kobolds whose broken bodies form a pathetic bleeding ring around a defiant scimitar-whirling cyclone of death. When that time comes, do not ponder the hopelessness of calling out for medical aid, but instead die in peace, comforted by the knowledge that I, Mokumok the Shaman, will record your death for posterity and the chief, as always, appreciates your sacrifice—probably.

AGE OF WORMS

by Jeremy Walker • Chad Dulac with UDON and Jim Zubkavich

Wormfood

Surviving the Age of Worms Adventure Path

Forgotten Magic

While the pages of *Dungeon* magazine present everything a DM needs to run the Age of Worms Adventure Path, every month *Dragon* gives the players of that—or any other campaign—tools to enhance their gaming experience.

In past ages, the Order of the Storm was a powerful cabal of druids and mages, dedicated to the preservation of the world and the destruction of undead. The forces of Kyuss and their draconic allies destroyed this sacred order centuries ago, stamping it out so thoroughly that memory of it has faded away. Foreseeing their imminent demise, these powerful spellcasters found a way to ensure that the knowledge they possessed concerning Kyuss and his allies would be preserved, safe both from the prying eyes of the curious and the shrouding mists of time.

During the course of the Age of Worms Adventure Path, the PCs discover the deserted paradise of this long-forgotten order and have a chance to learn some of its secrets. While the knowledge they gain is itself invaluable, some PCs might want something of more intrinsic value.

While they were renowned for both the power of their spells and the wisdom of their sages, the Order of the Storm also counted some of the most gifted artificers the world has ever seen among their numbers. When they disappeared, they took their secrets with them, and many powerful magic items vanished from the world, never to be seen again. Until now.

Because of the Order of the Storm's intimate knowledge of both dragons and the undead, most of its powerful creations either utilized the resources these monsters provided or were designed to aid in their destruction. Here is a selection of such items, now available for the PCs to create or commission.

Amulet of Light

Long ago, these simple sunburst pendants were given to the order's front-line soldiers to aid in the destruction of their undead foes and to prevent their comrades from rising as undead even as they fell. Each of these pendants radiates a continual *consecrate* effect, as the spell.

Moderate evocation; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *consecrate;* Price 25,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Breathdrinker Sword

This *+3 greatsword* possesses an inordinate amount of ornamentation. The blade itself is serrated, and numerous hooks, spikes, loops, and crossguards project irregularly from its surface. The grip contains an intricate wire handle, which flows over the hands of the wieldier and binds the sword to his flesh while he wields it. The sword grants its user a +8 circumstance bonus on checks made to resist disarming. The wielder is also immune to any energy damage resulting from breath weapons. In addition, once the sword has protected its wielder from a breath weapon, he can choose to store the energy of the breath weapon within the sword or have it dissipate harmlessly. If he chooses to store the energy, he is no longer protected from any future breath weapons as long as the energy remains stored, but if he successfully hits an opponent with the *breathdrinker sword* while it retains this stored power he may choose to

release it. If he does, his target suffers the breath weapon's effects in addition to the attack's normal damage (dealing the same damage with the usual Reflex save for half). The sword may retain its stored energy no longer than one day, after which it dissipates harmlessly. The sword offers no protection against breath weapons that do not deal energy damage.

Strong abjuration and evocation; CL 14th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *protection from energy, spell turning;* Price 50,350 gp; Weight 4 lb.

CLOAK OF THE SORCERER-KING

Like the ripples of sunlight off a pool of water, the brilliant colors of this full-length cloak seem to dance and swirl as its wearer moves. Woven from hundreds of tiny scales taken from each of the five chromatic dragons, this cloak has the ability to imbue the wearer with some of their power.

The *cloak of the sorcerer-king* grants its wearer a +6 enhancement bonus to Charisma. In addition, it allows the wearer to take on the aspect of each of the chromatic dragons once per day, gaining some of the abilities of that dragon. Activating an aspect is a standard action for the wearer, and each aspect lasts for 1 minute. No other aspect may be assumed for the duration of the effect. The following describes the aspects and their effects.

Black: The cloak becomes jet black and drinks in the surrounding light like a bottomless pit. The wearer's features shift subtly, his skin and hair take on a grayish cast and his eyes become an acidic shade of green. The wearer gains acid resistance 30 and may cast *darkness* once as a spell-like ability while the aspect lasts (CL 18th). In addition, any sorcerer spell he casts with the acid or water descriptor is automatically extended and empowered, as the metamagic feats, with no adjustment to the spell's level or casting time.

Blue: The cloak becomes dark blue and faint sparks of electricity dance over it. The wearer's features shift subtly, his skin and hair take on a bluish cast and his eyes fade to pure white. The wearer gains electricity resistance 30 and may cast *ventriloquism* once as a spell-like ability while the aspect lasts (CL 18th). In addition, any sorcerer spell he casts with the electricity or earth descriptor is automatically extended and empowered, as the metamagic feats, with no adjustment to the spell's level or casting time.

Green: The cloak becomes deep, forest green, and seems to fade into natural vegetation. The wearer's features shift subtly, his skin and hair take on a greenish cast and his eyes become a sickly shade of yellow. The wearer gains acid resistance 30 and may cast *suggestion* once as a spell-like ability while the aspect lasts (CL 18th). In addition, any sorcerer spell he casts with the acid or air descriptor is automatically extended and empowered, as the metamagic feats, with no adjustment to the spell's level or casting time.

Red: The cloak becomes bright red and seems to smoke and smolder.

The wearer's features shift subtly, his skin and hair take on a reddish cast, and his eyes glow with a golden light. The wearer gains fire resistance 30 and may cast *locate object* once as a spell-like ability while the aspect lasts (CL 18th). In addition, any sorcerer spell he casts with the fire descriptor is automatically extended and empowered, as the metamagic feats, with no adjustment to the spell's level or casting time.

White: The cloak becomes snow white and a chill hangs over it. The wearer's features shift subtly, his skin and hair fade to a bleached white, and his eyes darken to pure black. The wearer gains cold resistance 30 and may cast *fog cloud* once as a spell-like ability while the aspect lasts (CL 18th). In addition, any sorcerer spell he casts with the cold descriptor is automatically extended and empowered, as the metamagic feats, with no adjustment to the spell's level or casting time.

Strong abjuration and transmutation; CL 18th; Craft Wondrous Item, *eagle's splendor, resist energy,* creator must be a sorcerer; Price 102,000 gp, Weight 2 lb.

CORPOREAL LODESTONE

This powerful ward resembles nothing more than an unremarkable 1-inch-diameter sphere of polished steel. The lodestone's power, however, is a great blessing to those who battle incorporeal undead and creatures who can travel ethereally. The lodestone strengthens the boundary between the Ethereal Plane and the Material Plane, preventing any incorporeal undead from manifesting within a 20-foot radius. It also prevents any travel to and from the Ethereal Plane within that radius, negating the effects of spells such as *blink, ethereal jaunt,* and *etherealness.* Because the lodestone is so tightly bound to the Material Plane, it may not be taken to another plane. Any time its possessor is transported across planes, the lodestone remains behind.

Strong abjuration; CL 15th; Craft Wondrous Item, *dimensional lock;* Price 39,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

DOOMSLAYER BOW

Possibly the Order of the Storm's deadliest achievement, the means of crafting these bows remained a closely guarded secret for millennia. Crafted from ordinary yew and trimmed with dragon bone, there is little about this nondescript bow that reveals its undeniable power. A +2 *composite longbow* (+5 Strength), this bow allows the wielder to find the weak spots in his enemy's hide, allowing him to ignore any natural armor bonus (including any enhancement bonuses to that natural armor) for one attack three times per day. The wielder must declare that he is using this ability (a free action) before the attack roll is made.

Strong divination; CL 16th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *true strike;* Price 50,900 gp; Weight 3 lb.

DRAGONBANE SCEPTER

Crafted from adamantine and studded with precious and semi-precious stones, this scepter grants the ability to penetrate the arcane defenses of the most powerful dragons. The wielder receives a +4 bonus on caster level checks to overcome the spell resistance of dragons.

Moderate (no school); CL 10th; Craft Rod, Greater Spell Penetration; Price 5,500 gp.

ELIXIR OF DRACONIC ESSENCE

This elixir comes in five varieties, one for each of the five chromatic dragons. Made from the blood of true dragons and enhanced by magic, the elixir grants powers of its associated creature to whomever drinks it. Thick scales of the appropriate color cover the drinker's skin, granting him a +4 enhancement bonus to his existing natural armor bonus. Meanwhile, his physique grows in power to match his draconic form. He gains a +8 enhancement bonus to Strength, a +4 enhancement bonus to Constitution, a +2 enhancement bonus to Intelligence, and a +2 enhancement bonus to Charisma. His face extends into a fierce snout, while his fingers twist into sharp claws, giving him 2 claws and a bite he can use as natural attacks (damage is based on size, see the Dragon Essence table). Powerful wings burst from his shoulders, giving him a fly speed of 60 feet (average). He gains a breath weapon of the appropriate type (see the Dragon Essence table) usable once every 1d4 rounds, dealing 6d6 points of damage. A DC 14 Reflex save halves this damage. The drinker also gains complete immunity to the energy type associated with his breath weapon. These effects remain for 10 minutes.

Moderate transmutation; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, *polymorph;* Price 6,550 gp; Weight 1 lb.

PHYLACTERY OF PROTECTION FROM EVIL

This phylactery continuously grants the wearer the effects of the *protection from evil* spell. While this type of protection is the most common version of this item, phylacteries for the other protection from alignment spells also exist.

Moderate abjuration; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, *magic circle against evil;* Price 30,000 gp; Weight 1/2 lb.

QUICKSILVER CLOAK

This shimmering silver cloak seems to be spun from quicksilver. Its form constantly ripples and flows around the wearer and light dances across its surface. It grants the wearer complete immunity to paralysis and a +10 competence bonus on Escape Artist checks.

Moderate abjuration; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, *freedom of movement;* Price 25,000 gp; Weight 2 lb.

RING OF DEATH WARD

This ring continuously grants its wearer the protection of the *death ward* spell.

Moderate abjuration; CL 7th; Forge Ring, *death ward;* Price 60,000 gp; Weight —.

DRAGON ESSENCE

Size	Bite	Claws
Fine	1	—
Diminutive	1d2	1
Tiny	1d3	1d2
Small	1d4	1d3
Medium	1d6	1d4
Large	1d8	1d6
Huge	2d6	1d8
Gargantuan	3d6	2d6
Colossal	4d6	3d6

Dragon Variety	Breath Weapon
Black	60-foot line of acid
Blue	60-foot line of lightning
Green	30-foot cone of corrosive (acid) gas
Red	30-foot cone of fire
White	30-foot cone of cold

SHIELD OF THE SUN

This +2 *heavy steel shield* has a highly polished concave reflective surface that contains a large golden gem at its center. Twice per day, on command, the gem can ignite a brilliant beam of sunlight, blinding the living and destroying the undead. This effect is equivalent to a *sunbeam* spell (caster level 13th).

Strong evocation; CL 13th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *sunbeam*; Price 74,170 gp; Weight 15 lb.

SHROUD OF UNDEATH

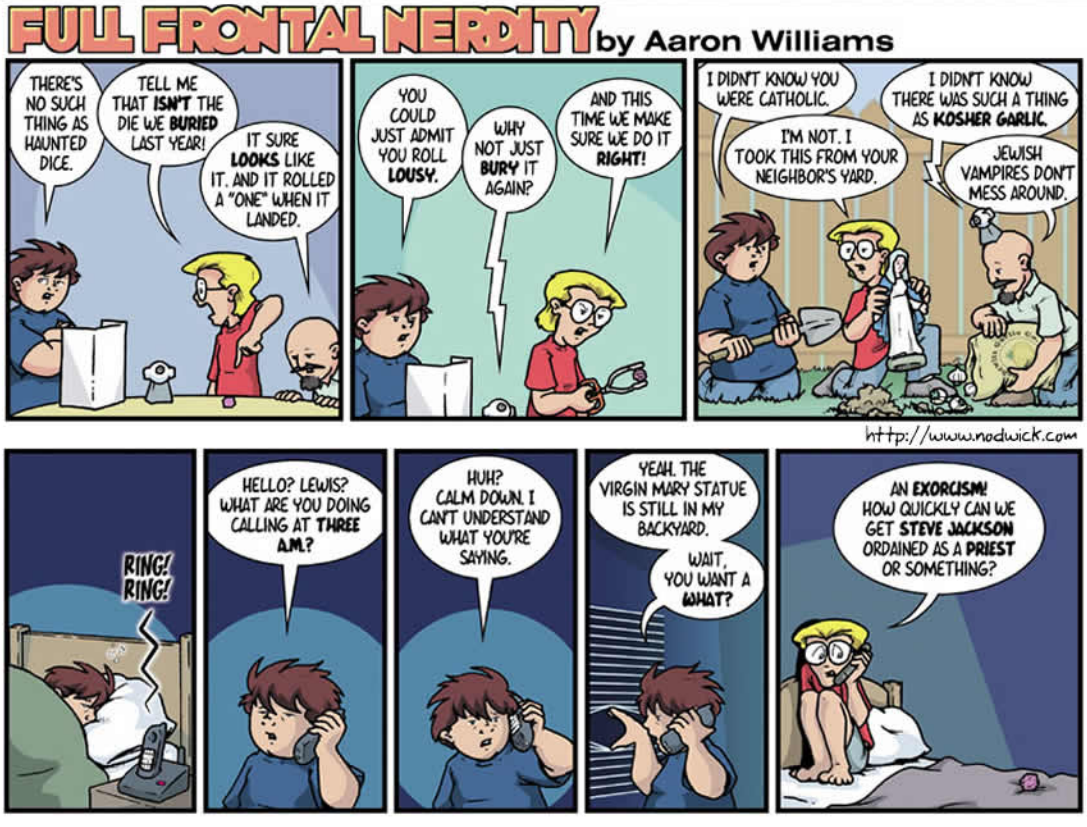
This mantle is made from plain gray silk, embroidered with delicate white tracings of powerful runes of death and warding. Worn over normal clothing or armor, it continuously gives the wearer the benefits of the *hide from undead* spell (Will save DC 15).

Faint abjuration; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *hide from undead*; Price 7,500 gp; Weight 1 lb.

SKULL OF DRAGONFORM

Crafted from the skulls of the mightiest dragons, magically resized to fit over a humanoid-sized head, these items are among the most sought-after of the order's creations—for who has not wished to be a dragon? This item comes in five varieties, each crafted from the skull of a different-colored chromatic dragon. Once per day, the wearer may transform into a juvenile dragon of the appropriate kind. This effect lasts for 1 hour, although it may be dismissed at any time as a standard action. The effect functions as the *polymorph* spell (caster level 17th, without the HD restriction), except that the wearer gains the breath weapon of the dragon he becomes, as well as its sensory abilities (darkvision, keen senses, blindsense, and so on).

Strong transmutation; CL 17th; Craft Wondrous Item, *shapechange*; Price 86,000 gp; Weight 4 lb.


FULL FRONTAL NERDITY by Aaron Williams
THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS HAUNTED DICE.
TELL ME THAT ISN'T THE DIE WE BURIED LAST YEAR!
IT SURE LOOKS LIKE IT. AND IT ROLLED A "ONE" WHEN IT LANDED.
YOU COULD JUST ADMIT YOU ROLL LOUSY.
WHY NOT JUST BURY IT AGAIN?
AND THIS TIME WE MAKE SURE WE DO IT RIGHT!
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE CATHOLIC.
I'M NOT. I TOOK THIS FROM YOUR NEIGHBOR'S YARD.
I DIDN'T KNOW THERE WAS SUCH A THING AS KOSHER GARLIC.
JEWISH VAMPIRES DON'T MESS AROUND.
http://www.nodwick.com
RING! RING!
HELLO? LEWIS? WHAT ARE YOU DOING CALLING AT THREE A.M.?
HUH? CALM DOWN. I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.
YEAH. THE VIRGIN MARY STATUE IS STILL IN MY BACKYARD.
WAIT, YOU WANT A WHAT?
AN EXORCISM! HOW QUICKLY CAN WE GET STEVE JACKSON ORDAINED AS A PRIEST OR SOMETHING?

HEALER'S TOUCH

The most recent great war brought incredible challenges. Many pious clerics of Pelor strove to heal everyone fighting for the cause of good. At times, the war made this task nigh impossible. The sheer volume of injuries and casualties, coupled with the dangers inherent to the battlefield, meant the clerics of the Shining One quickly became overwhelmed. Many injured soldiers died awaiting treatment.

Simple items, such as wands and potions of curative magic, proved useful but insufficient. A young half-orc named Tholveg, originally a warrior on the front lines of the war, saw this growing problem firsthand. Tired of the constant destruction wrought by war, she returned to a Pelorian temple-hospital and became a member of the clergy there. She spent months in quiet contemplation, tending to the injured and dying, until she received a vision. Sharing her vision with her superiors, Tholveg divided her time between tending patients and researching new ways to improve the care provided by other clerics. After the war, her legend says, Pelor himself appeared before Tholveg and took her from the material world.

Regardless of the truth of the legend surrounding her fate, the research conducted by Tholveg and her followers has proven invaluable in the years since. In an effort to spread care to as many suffering beings as possible, the church of Pelor has allowed its many clerics to share these items (and the knowledge of making them) with clerics of other good and neutral deities. The following items always appear in the best-stocked hospitals and temples of Pelor, and most clerics devoted to healing at least know of their existence. Thanks to the openness of Pelor's clergy many adventurers have made excellent use of these items.

AMULET OF PRESERVATION

Death is imminent. Unavoidable. In war, the tragedy of the death of one person becomes subsumed by the tragedy of the deaths of many. When faced with such wide-scale mortality, maintaining some semblance of sanitary conditions becomes paramount .

Securing an *amulet of preservation* around a corpse's neck halts the decaying process for as long as it remains on the corpse. In addition, the *amulet of preservation* prevents the deceased wearer from rising as the spawn of certain undead (like ghouls, shadows, and vampires), and days spent under the influence of the amulet do not count against the time limit of a *raise dead* spell. Though developed by clerics of Pelor, the clergy of Wee Jas has found the greatest use for these items.

Faint necromancy; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Items, *gentle repose;* Price 6,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

BOLT OF HEALING

After spending several years at the war's front, Tholveg developed a keen sense of irony. One of her first creations as a cleric of Pelor came from her frustrations

when attempting to bring injured companions to healers on the battlefield. Painted bright red and affixed with a blunt, cushioned tip, a *bolt of healing* allows a crossbow wielder to provide succor to her allies instead of suffering to her enemies.

When one of these *+1 crossbow bolts* strikes a target, it explodes in a flash of positive energy. A successful hit from a *bolt of healing* deals no damage, but instead cures its target of 1d8+5 points of damage. Against undead and other creatures harmed by positive energy, the bolt inflicts 1d8+5 points of damage instead. An undead creature struck by a *bolt of healing* can apply spell resistance and can make a DC 11 Will save to take half damage. Making a successful critical hit with a *bolt of healing* has no additional effect: the bolt still cures 1d8+5 points of damage regardless of how well it strikes.

Faint conjuration; CL 5th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *cure light wounds;* Price 132 gp; Weight —.

CALMING STONE

Pain, fear, insanity, and shock can cause a normally complacent and rational person to pose a danger to himself and others when brought into a hospital or healing tent. Healers and clerics find it difficult to administer treatment to a flailing patient, and helpful orderlies aren't always nearby to hold one down. Thus came *calming stones*. Since their introduction, *calming stones* have also become popular as decor in chambers set aside for diplomacy and political discourse.

When a user touches the stone and utters the command word, this 1-foot-diameter smooth rock emits a light, melodic tune that creates the effect of a *calm emotions* spell for up to 10 minutes. Repeating the command word ends the effect. A *calming stone* can be used up to three times per day.

Faint enchantment; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *calm emotions, ghost sound;* Price 10,800 gp; Weight 25 lb.

DETOXIFICATION ORB

While not nearly as dangerous or feared on the battlefield as in the intrigue-ridden halls of court, poison can nonetheless bring down even the heartiest warrior. Since the creation of *detoxification orbs*, royals, nobles, and wealthy merchants alike have sought to acquire them en masse.

A crystal orb roughly 6 to 8 inches in diameter, a *detoxification orb* works when it is placed against the skin of a poisoned creature and tapped twice. In a flash of light the orb draws out any poisons in the creature's system, filling the otherwise clear sphere with a green mist. This effect duplicates the *neutralize poison* spell, except its duration is instantaneous and thus does not provide any further protection. After 1 round the mist dissipates within the orb. A *detoxification orb* crumbles to dust after 10 uses.

As a standard action, the user of the *detoxification orb* can make a Craft (poisonmaking) check to identify a poison drawn out with it (the DC equals the poison's Fortitude save DC).

Faint conjuration; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *neutralize poison;* Price 3,000 gp; Weight 2 lb.

GEM OF POISON DETECTION

Defense is harder than offense, and this is most true when it comes to poison. For centuries, those who attacked with poison could use their weapon of choice at will, having little fear of discovery. With the recent development of a cheap and reliable means of locating poisons and toxins, however, it is the attacker who must now innovate.

This magical gem appears as a finely cut emerald. Placing the gem against a creature's bare skin and speaking the first command word detects whether or not the creature is poisoned. When placed within 1 foot of food or drink and the second command word is spoken it detects poison present. Pointing the gem at a creature within 30 feet with whom you have line of effect and speaking the third command word detects whether that creature has a poison attack or is using poison on one of its weapons. If the *gem of poison detection* detects poison in any of those three ways it turns black and cold.

Even if the *gem of poison detection* is somehow disenchanted it remains a gem worth 100 gp.

Faint divination; CL 1st; Craft Wondrous Item, *detect poison;* Price 1,100 gp; Weight —.

MASK

Those who spend their lives tending to the sick risk illness themselves. These masks help protect healers so they may continue their good works.

Made from strong burlap and treated with special chemicals as well as magical enhancements, a character wears a *healer's mask* over his mouth and nose, taking up the necklace slot. A *healer's mask* casts *remove disease* on its wearer when first donned. A *healer's mask* can only cast *remove disease* once; if removed and donned again it provides only the +2 bonus on saves. For one month after the mask casts *remove disease* it provides a +2 bonus on all saves made to resist or overcome diseases (natural or magical) to anyone wearing the mask when such a save must be made. At the end of that month the *healer's mask* becomes a nonmagical burlap mask. Any creature may gain the saving throw bonus, but only the first creature to put on the mask gains the benefit of the *remove disease*.

Faint abjuration; CL 1st; Craft Wondrous Items, *remove disease, resistance;* Price 3,125 gp; Weight —.

MEDIC HAT

These upright white hats made of a heavy cloth bear Pelor's holy symbol. Healers of all faiths who spend time on battlefields cherish these items. Veterans generally don't bother directly attacking those wearing *medic hats*, as the hats provide their wearers with a powerful ward that guards them against direct assault.

Whenever a *medic hat* wearer casts a spell of the conjuration (healing) subschool she is protected as by the *sanctuary* spell (DC 11) for 1 round per level of healing spell cast (a 0-level spell grants no *sanctuary* effect). The duration of the *sanctuary* effect overlaps with multiple healing spells so that only the highest-level or most recent spell affects it. For example, a cleric who casts *heal* is protected for 6 rounds. If she casts *heal* again on the next round the duration of her *sanctuary* effect lasts for 6 rounds beginning that round. Those who succeed on the Will save to attack the wearer of a *medic hat* are immune to its effects for one day.

Faint abjuration; CL 1st; Craft Wondrous Items, *sanctuary;* Price 8,000 gp; Weight —.

ROD OF DISENCHANTMENT

A foot-long ivory rod with 1-inch bands of ebony at either end, a *rod of disenchantment* is the bane of those who rely on magical effects to bolster their abilities. To those afflicted with detrimental magic, it is a blessing.

When touched to a creature (a melee touch attack) and the command word is uttered, several effects occur simultaneously and instantaneously:

- All enchantments on the creature cease functioning.
- All transmutation effects on the creature end.
- All curses (as from *bestow curse*) on the creature are removed.
- All cursed items in the creature's possession cease functioning and drop to the ground.

All effects function as per *break enchantment* at caster level 16.

After discharging, a *rod of disenchantment* loses its magical properties for 12 hours until it recharges (it still detects as magical, however). The rod creates the following effects:

Moderate abjuration; CL 16th; Craft Rod, *break enchantment, greater dispel magic;* Price 50,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

THOLVEG'S FINAL PRAYER

According to the legend surrounding Tholveg, the first appearance of this item came when Pelor took her from the material world. Supposedly, those who witnessed the event found a handful of these items near the location of her disappearance.

Pelor's holy symbol is clearly visible within the center of this 1-inch-diameter fragile clear crystal marble. To use this item, the user must shatter the item upon the ground (as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity) and loudly exclaim, "May Pelor's grace protect me."

When activating the item, the user must immediately choose one of four effects: *cure serious wounds, remove blindness/deafness, remove curse,* or *remove disease.* All effects target the item's user and are cast at 15th level.

Strong conjuration and abjuration; CL 15th; Craft Wondrous Item, *cure serious wounds, remove blindness/deafness, remove curse, remove disease;* Price 3,000 gp; Weight —.

In memory of Jessica Marshall.

Alien Blessings

Spells of Monstrous Deities

by Eric Cagle • illustrated by Warren Mahy

Just as the deities of civilized races grant boons to their worshipers, the deities of monstrous humanoids, giants, and aberrations also imbue their faithful with unique powers. To the outside observer, the spells granted by these bizarre deities are just as strange and, in some cases, repulsive as those who utilize them. For the faithful, however, these spells represent special acceptance and blessings from their patrons.

Described here are several spells that monstrous deities grant their clerics. In rare cases, creatures not part of a deity's favored race but who prove themselves to be devout worshipers, can gain access to these spells.

BLACK STENCH OF LAOGZED

Conjuration (Creation)
Level: Clr 4, Sor/Wiz 5
Components: V, S, M/DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Effect: Cloud spreads in a 20-ft. radius from you, 20 ft. high
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Fortitude half (see text)
Spell Resistance: No

You produce a cloud of utterly black, acidic, and horrific-smelling gas centered on you, a breath of foul air belched by the stinking god Laogzed himself. Living creatures in the cloud become nauseated, and take 1d6 points of acid damage per two caster levels per round (maximum 5d6). A successful Fortitude save negates the nausea and halves the damage. In addition, this gas obscures all sight, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. A creature 5 feet away has concealment (attacks have a 20% miss chance). Creatures farther away have total concealment (50% miss chance, and the attacker cannot use sight to locate the target; creatures that rely on the scent ability cannot locate the caster while this spell is in effect). While you are immune to the stench and acid damage of your own spell, you are affected by this spell's darkness. Holding one's breath does not help to avoid the effects of this spell.

A moderate wind (11+ mph) disperses this gas in 4 rounds. A strong or greater wind (21+ mph), such as from a *gust of wind* spell, disperses this gas in 1 round. A *fireball*, *flame strike*, or similar spell burns away the gas in its area of effect. A *wall of fire* burns away the gas in the area into which it deals damage.

This spell does not function underwater. For the duration of this spell any stench or scent-based ability you or creatures in the area of effect possess is overwhelmed and does not function.

Arcane Material Component: A piece of a troglodyte's tail.

Magic of Monstrous Deities

The deities of monstrous races bestow spells on their clerics just as other deities do. The minds of monsters operate in different ways than most humanoids, and the rites, rituals, and spells of their clerics might seem extremely bizarre or disgusting to others. The spells granted by monster deities should reflect the mentality, physicality, abilities, and needs of the race they represent. For example, few spells granted by the beholder goddess, the Great Mother, have material components, due to her follower's lack of limbs to manipulate them.

The following is a list of the monster deities presented in this article. For a more comprehensive list see page 124 of *Complete Divine*.

Name	Portfolio	Alignment	Domains
Blibdoolpoolp	kuo-toas	CE	Destruction, Evil, Water
Iallanis	cloud giants, storm giants, stone giants,	NG	Good, Healing, Strength, Sun
Ilsensine	mind flayers	LE	Evil, Knowledge, Law, Magic
Laogzed	troglodytes	CE	Chaos, Death, Destruction, Evil
Luthic	orcs	NE	Earth, Evil, Healing

BRAIN SLAVE OF ILSENSINE

Conjuration (Summoning)
Level: Clr 6, Sor/Wiz 6
Components: V, S, M/DF
Casting Time: 1 round
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Effect: One or more summoned disembodied brains
Duration: 1 round/level (D)
Saving Throw: Will negates (see text)
Spell Resistance: No

A glowing, floating green brain with two tentacles, similar in appearance to a miniature avatar of Ilsensine, appears and circles about you. At any time during this spell's duration you can command this brain to attack a Small, Medium, or Large creature in order to extract its brain. The brain slave gets two attacks made at your base attack bonus, and has a +6 grapple bonus. If it hits with either of its attacks, it causes no damage but can immediately attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple, it establishes a hold and attaches the tentacle to its opponent's head. If neither tentacle is able to grapple the brain slave vanishes.

If the *brain slave of Ilsensine* begins its turn with one of its tentacles attached, it can try to attach the other with a single grapple check (without making an attack roll). The opponent can escape with a single successful opposed grapple check or an Escape Artist check, but the brain slave gets a +2 circumstance bonus on its opposed check. Completely detaching a brain slave causes it to vanish.

A *brain slave of Ilsensine* that begins its turn with both tentacles attached and that makes a successful grapple check automatically extracts the opponent's brain, instantly killing the target. This power is useless against constructs, elementals, oozes, plants, undead, or creatures of greater than Large size. It is not instantly fatal to foes with multiple heads.

You can summon an additional *brain slave of Ilsensine* per 2 caster levels.

Arcane Material Component: A small portion of brain from a humanoid or monstrous humanoid.

NAILS OF LUTHIC

Transmutation
Level: Clr 5
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 min./level

The nails on your hands grow long, extremely tough, and turn a deep purple, similar to those of the orc goddess, Luthic. Your nails also exude a thick, black, viscous poison. These nails act as natural weapons that deal 1d6 points of damage and have a threat range of 19–20. You are considered armed while this spell is in effect. If you are Small, your nails deal 1d4 points of damage. If you are Large, they deal 1d8 points of damage. Add your Strength modifier to your attacks with these nails. Attacks with your transformed hands do not hinder your manual dexterity or spellcasting, although the nails do replace any slam or claw attack you might possess for the duration of the spell.

In addition, any creature that takes damage from your nails risks being poisoned. Injury; Fortitude resists; initial and secondary damage 1d4 Dexterity.

THROWING ARM OF IALLANIS

Transmutation
Level: Clr 4, Drd 5
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Effect: Creature touched
Duration: 1 round/5 levels
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes

The affected creature gains the ability to throw massive rocks. Upon casting this spell a giant stone materializes in one of the target's empty hands (the spell fails if the target does not have an empty hand). Although this rock would probably be too heavy to heft under normal conditions, the target can fling this projectile as a giant one size category larger

than himself. The rock has a range increment and deals damage as noted on the following chart. The rock created by this spell cannot be used in any other way than to make a ranged attack.

For every round this spell lasts a new rock materializes in one of the target's empty hands, which he is then capable of throwing on his next turn (up to a maximum of 4 rocks).

If the target already possesses the rock throwing ability, he gains a +4 bonus on attacks made using the rocks created by this spell in addition to any racial bonuses to rock throwing.

Creatures of Small size or smaller are beneath Iallanis's notice and gain no benefit from this spell.

Target Size	Range	Rock Damage
Medium	120 ft.	2d6
Large	140 ft.	2d8
Huge	160 ft.	3d6
Gargantuan	180 ft.	3d8
Colossal	200 ft.	4d6

TOUCH OF BLIBDOOLPOOLP

Transmutation
Level: Clr 3, Drd 3
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 min./level

Your hand turns into an enormous lobsterlike claw. This claw gives you a natural attack with reach and deals bludgeoning damage as indicated on the following chart. If you attack only with the claw, making it your primary attack, the claw adds 1-1/2 times your Strength modifier to damage. The claw can also be used as a secondary attack in conjunction with a manufactured weapon. Such secondary attacks do not interfere with your primary attack as attacking with an offhand weapon would, but you take the usual –5 penalty and add only half of your Strength modifier to damage. Regardless of how you use the claw, you are considered armed while this spell is in effect.

If you hit with this claw attack, you can attempt a grapple check against your opponent without provoking an attack of opportunity and as if you were one size category larger. If you succeed at the grapple attempt, the claw establishes a hold and deals additional damage, as described on the following table, each round with a successful grapple check. The claw's size bonus applies on all disarm, grapple, and trip attempts made with the claw.

A creature that already possesses a claw attack may use its own claw damage or that granted by the spell, whichever is greater. You cannot hold any objects in your transformed hand or cast spells with somatic components while your hand is in this shape.

Size	Damage	Reach	Size Bonus
Fine	1	0 ft.	–12
Diminutive	1	0 ft.	–8
Tiny	1d3	5 ft.	–4
Small	1d4	5 ft.	+0
Medium	1d6	10 ft.	+4
Large	1d8	15 ft.	+8
Huge	2d6	20 ft.	+12
Gargantuan	2d8	40 ft.	+16
Colossal	4d6	60 ft.	+20

New Spells of Monstrous Deities

In order for a creature that is not of the deity's chosen to learn these spells, the creature must find a spellcaster willing to part with such sacred information. Few deities approve of betraying their secrets to infidels of other races and might punish the offending magic-user in unspeakable ways—unless, of course, disseminating these spells is part of some grand master plan. Alternatively, one might simply seek the favor of the monstrous deity who bestows the spell he desires, performing rites and supplicating himself in exchange for the power of an alien faith.

Cleric Spells

3rd-Level Cleric Spell

Touch of Blibdoolpoolp: Transforms one of your hands into an oversized claw.

4th-Level Cleric Spells

Black Stench of Laogzed: Creates a cloud of opaque, acidic, nauseating gas.

Throwing Arm of Iallanis: Target can throw rocks as a giant one size category larger.

5th-Level Cleric Spell

Nails of Luthic: Your hands grow nails that exude poison.

6th-Level Cleric Spell

Brain Slave of Ilsensine: Summons disembodied brains that can extract an opponent's brain.

Druid Spells

3rd-Level Druid Spell

Touch of Blibdoolpoolp: Transforms one of your hands into an oversized claw.

5th-Level Druid Spell

Throwing Arm of Iallanis: Target can throw rocks as a giant one size category larger.

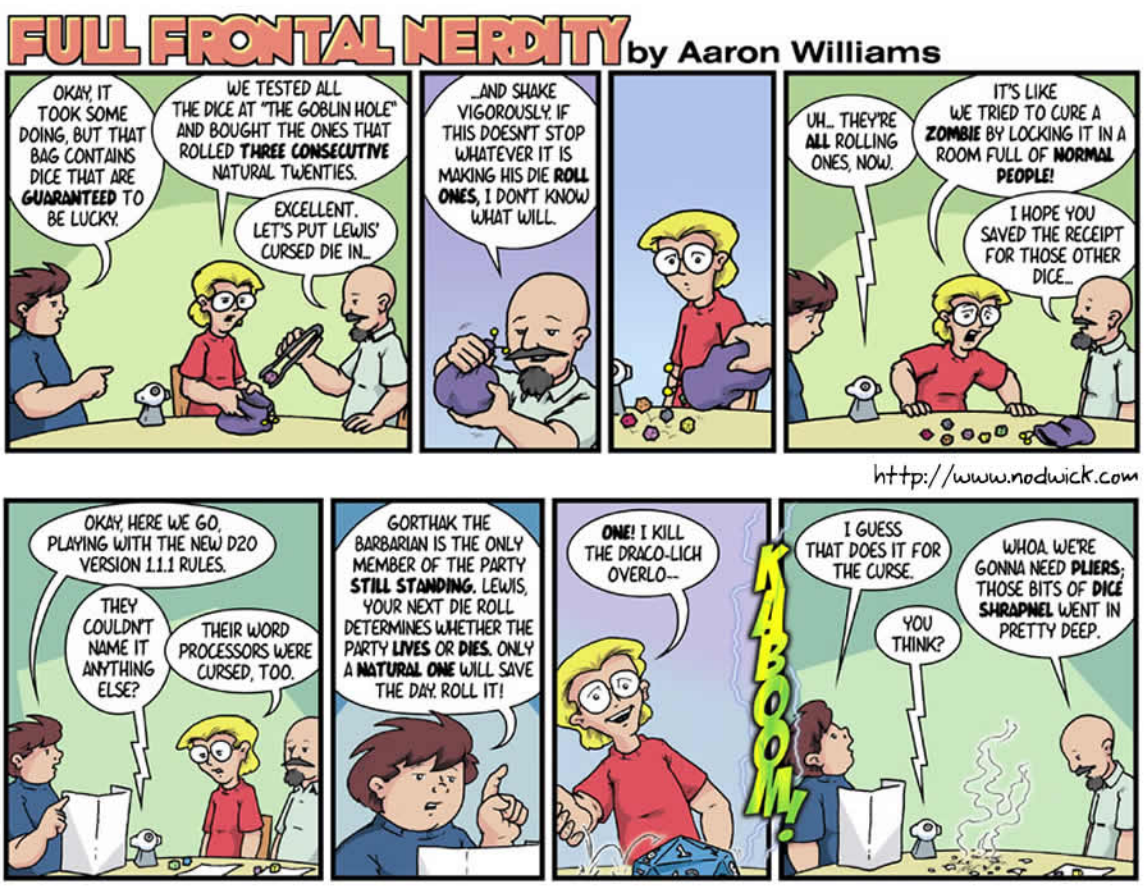
Sorcerer/Wizard Spells

5th-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spell

Black Stench of Laogzed: Creates a cloud of opaque, acidic, nauseating gas.

6th-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spell

Brain Slave of Ilsensine: Summons disembodied brains that can extract an opponent's brain.


FULL FRONTAL NERDITY by Aaron Williams
OKAY, IT TOOK SOME DOING, BUT THAT BAG CONTAINS DICE THAT ARE GUARANTEED TO BE LUCKY.
WE TESTED ALL THE DICE AT "THE GOBLIN HOLE" AND BOUGHT THE ONES THAT ROLLED THREE CONSECUTIVE NATURAL TWENTIES.
EXCELLENT. LET'S PUT LEWIS' CURSED DIE IN..
..AND SHAKE VIGOROUSLY. IF THIS DOESN'T STOP WHATEVER IT IS MAKING HIS DIE ROLL ONES, I DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL.
UH.. THEY'RE ALL ROLLING ONES, NOW.
IT'S LIKE WE TRIED TO CURE A ZOMBIE BY LOCKING IT IN A ROOM FULL OF NORMAL PEOPLE!
I HOPE YOU SAVED THE RECEIPT FOR THOSE OTHER DICE...
http://www.nodwick.com
OKAY, HERE WE GO, PLAYING WITH THE NEW D20 VERSION 1.1.1 RULES.
THEY COULDN'T NAME IT ANYTHING ELSE?
THEIR WORD PROCESSORS WERE CURSED, TOO.
GORTHAK THE BARBARIAN IS THE ONLY MEMBER OF THE PARTY STILL STANDING. LEWIS, YOUR NEXT DIE ROLL DETERMINES WHETHER THE PARTY LIVES OR DIES. ONLY A NATURAL ONE WILL SAVE THE DAY. ROLL IT!
ONE! I KILL THE DRACO-LICH OVERLO--
KABOOM!
I GUESS THAT DOES IT FOR THE CURSE.
YOU THINK?
WHOA. WE'RE GONNA NEED PLIERS; THOSE BITS OF DICE SHRAPNEL WENT IN PRETTY DEEP.

by Andy Collins • illustrated by Niklas Janssen

OFFICIAL ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

This month, the Sage goes on the offensive with a series of questions related to combat. Send the Sage your questions at **sageadvice@paizo.com**.

Does darkvision allow a character to read and write in the dark? Can he see his reflection in a mirror?

Darkvision is described as the "ability to see with no light source at all" (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 292). This suggests that a character with darkvision can read, write, and otherwise perform a normal range of actions despite being in complete darkness.

The simplest answer to the mirror question is yes. To avoid delving too deeply into real-world physics—something it's best to resist, particularly in fantasy gaming—it's easiest to treat darkvision as allowing a character to perceive anything that a normal person could see with light.

If my character permanently changes type, does he change his base attack bonus or saving throws based on the new type?

A PC's base attack bonus and base save bonuses aren't based on his type, they're based on his class. A 10th-level aasimar wizard doesn't have the attack and save bonuses of a 10-HD outsider, she has the attack and save bonuses of a 9th-level wizard.

A PC with racial Hit Dice (such as a centaur) gains base attack and save bonuses from his racial HD as well as any class levels he has. If such a character's type changes, his base attack and saves change only if the source of the change indicates that they change. Some templates (such as the vampire template) stipulate that base attack and saves remain the same regardless of the change.

Are monsters' ability scores adjusted as they age (like PC races)?

The rules include no information on age categories for creatures other than the PC races listed in various books, so the Sage concludes that ability score adjustments by age (such as those described on Table 6–5: Aging Effects, in the *Player's Handbook*) apply only to those races for which they're listed.

If a DM wanted to create age categories for other creatures, the Sage advises using existing numbers as a guideline.

Does a human who becomes an undead apply the ability score adjustments as he ages?

The Sage recommends that aging effects not be applied to a PC who becomes undead.

It seems unreasonable that an undead's physical ability scores should change based on the original race's lifespan (why should a dwarf vampire stay strong longer than a half-orc vampire?).

Similarly, applying adjustments to mental ability scores seems to create more problems than it's worth. Should a skeleton that's been dead for 200 years be wiser than one that was just created?

That said, if a DM wanted to apply aging effects to ability scores for undead PCs, it's not terribly unbalancing. He should just be prepared to answer a lot of corner-case questions—questions about weird rule interactions that can't all be covered in rulebooks—and most DMs will find it more hassle than it's worth.

Does a character who has been swallowed whole treat the swallowing monster as flat-footed?

The Sage thinks that's a reasonable interpretation. The "swallow whole" entry on page 315 of the *Monster Manual* indicates that the AC of the interior of a swallowing creature has "no modifiers for... Dexterity." While this isn't necessarily quite the same as saying that the monster is denied its Dexterity bonus to AC, it's pretty close.

In addition, it certainly seems true that the swallowed character has total concealment from (i.e., is "invisible to") the swallowing creature, which would allow the character to treat the creature as flat-footed against his attacks.

Put together, this means that letting the rogue get gulped might make an effective way to defeat a swallowing monster... assuming the bite and ongoing damage doesn't kill her.

Do characters receive experience for killing a summoned monster? What about undead created with *animate dead* or an outsider called with *planar ally*?

As a general rule, any creature whose presence on the battlefield is a direct result of another creature using one of its special abilities (such as summoning) during the battle doesn't grant XP to characters defeating it. This is because the monster is counted as part of the challenge provided by the summoning monster. A pit fiend's Challenge Rating (and thus the XP reward granted for defeating him) already takes into account the fact that he can summon allies; without that ability, he'd be worth less XP.

However, there are plenty of situations where a DM should make exceptions to this general rule. Any time that a creature can bring an ally into play without reducing the resources it otherwise brings to the fight (or well outside of combat) you should strongly consider awarding XP for defeating that ally.

Let's look at a few examples to see how this might work in play.

Example 1: Over the course of many days, a powerful necromancer stocks his lair with undead created via spells. When the PCs fight the necromancer and these undead minions, the necromancer has his full array of spells, so the act of creating these undead hasn't reduced the challenge he provides. Thus, the Sage recommends awarding full XP for defeating the undead.

Example 2: The same necromancer is on the run, knowing the PCs aren't far behind. He spends some of his precious daily allotment of spells to animate a few zombies, only minutes before the PCs bust down his door and attack. That's a lot more like summoning, since the creation of the undead represents a direct drain on the necromancer's immediately available resources. Still, he doesn't have to spend any rounds of combat casting the spells, so it's not quite the same. The Sage recommends awarding one-half XP for defeating the undead.

Example 3: An evil cleric uses *lesser planar ally* to call a succubus to serve him as a spy for 7 days, and sends her up against the PCs (without being present himself). The Sage recommends awarding full XP for defeating the succubus. If the PCs then track down and defeat the evil cleric before he's able to prepare spells again, it's tempting to reduce the XP award for the cleric by a little bit (since he's down one 4th-level spell), but it's probably not worth the effort.

When in doubt, err on the side of awarding XP. The DM shouldn't be looking for opportunities to deny the PCs fairly earned XP—if they bested the challenge, they should reap the reward.

If a character levels up after taking Intelligence damage does the number of skill points he receives for the new level depend on his normal Intelligence score or his damaged score? What if he takes ability

drain instead of damage? What happens to his existing skill ranks?

As noted on page 38 of the *Player's Handbook*, only permanent changes to Intelligence affect the number of skill points you gain when taking a new level. A character with Intelligence damage gains skill points based on his normal (undamaged) Intelligence score, while a character with Intelligence drain gains skill points based on the adjusted score.

Either way, this has no effect on his existing skill ranks. Permanent changes to Intelligence don't retroactively change your number of skill ranks from previous levels.

How do you determine the starting gold for a 1st-level monster class character (such as from *Savage Species*)?

The easiest method is simply to assign standard starting gold for any character who doesn't have a value already listed. The Sage recommends 4d4 x 10 gp (or 100 gp average).

If you want some variety between the monster-class characters in your game, try assigning a starting gold value for a *Player's Handbook* class that's similar to the monster in flavor. An ogre or minotaur, for instance, is pretty similar to a barbarian (4d4 x 10 gp), but a mind flayer is more like a sorcerer (3d4 x 10 gp). Ultimately, it doesn't matter much—the difference between the various values in the *Player's Handbook* disappear within a couple of adventures when compared to the character's overall wealth.

If my character's familiar dies (and my character loses experience points for it) but a cleric *resurrects* the familiar does my character get back the XP he lost?

Nope. On the bright side, you do get your beloved Fluffy back.

When a character dies and comes back to life a level lower, are there any guidelines as to which level he must lose? Does it have to be the last level he gained? When he gains a level again later, can he choose a different class than he did originally? What about a 1st-level character (who instead loses a point of Constitution)? Can he begin with a new class completely?

The rules are silent on this issue, but it seems most logical if the character loses the class level he gained most recently. The same is true of any feats, skill ranks, or ability score adjustments gained due to the now-lost level. The character is under no obligation to make the same selection(s) when he next gains a level with XP.

A character who regains a lost level from *restoration* or a similar effect must regain the same class level (and other abilities) that he lost. In other words, you can't use level drain and *restoration* to rebuild your character.

A 1st-level character doesn't lose a class level, so he can't change his existing class level.

ERRATA

The Sage would like to correct one of his recent answers regarding sheathing weapons. While the primary answer was correct, the Sage wandered a bit afield and in doing so, got himself turned around. Let this be a lesson to all would-be frequent-question-answerers to be careful when your answers begin straying into topics not actually part of the question!

Does Quick Draw (*Player's Handbook*, page 98) allow you to sheathe a weapon as a free action?

No. Quick Draw clearly states that it allows you to "draw a weapon as a free action." Nowhere does it suggest anything about sheathing a weapon more quickly than normal (a move action).

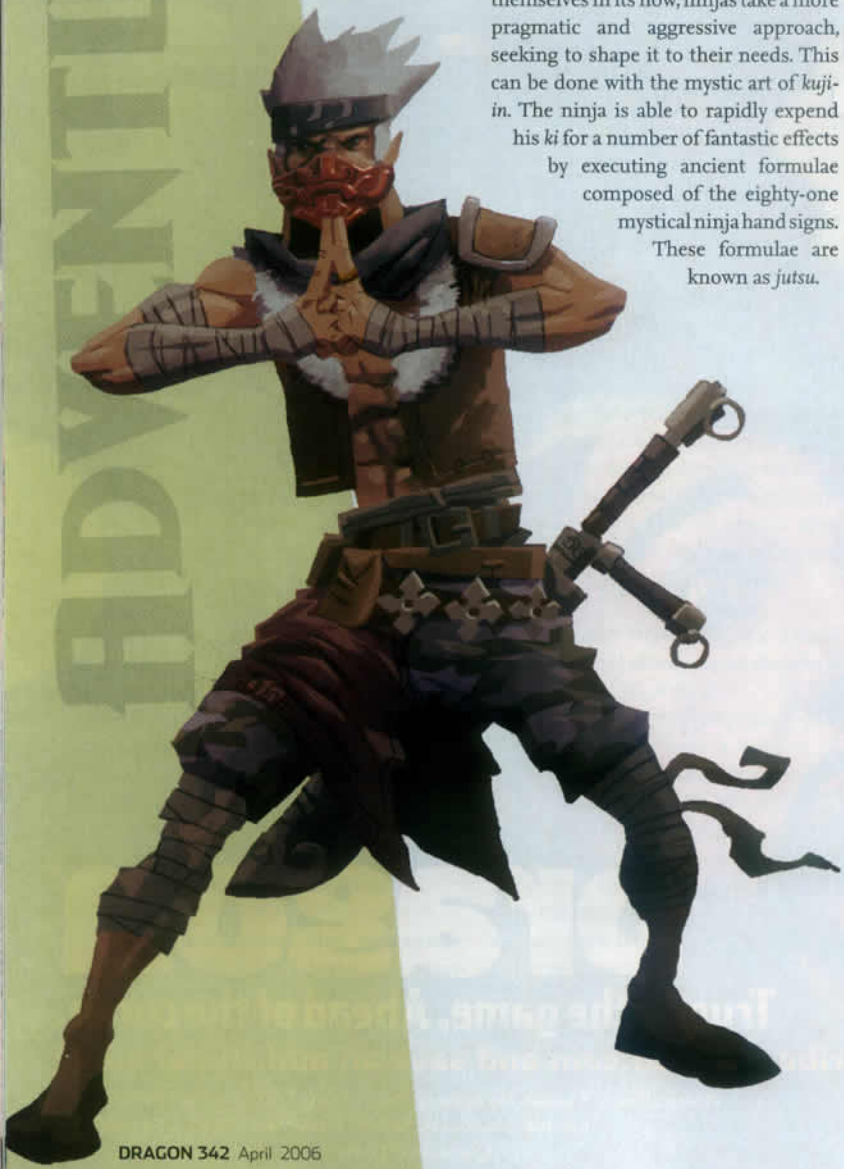
You may be confusing Quick Draw with the ability of any character with a base attack bonus of +1 or better to draw or sheathe a weapon as a free action as part of movement (*Player's Handbook*, page 142). While these functions are similar and overlap to some extent, they are different.

And now,
FULL FRONTAL NERDITY
presents:
"Why the cast of Full Frontal Nerdity shouldn't discuss politics."
by Aaron Williams
DID YOU HEAR ABOUT JACK RYAN?
YEAH, HE'S THE SENATE CANDIDATE MARRIED TO JERRI RYAN.
THE ACTRESS WHO PLAYED "SEVEN OF NINE?"
WHO WE CALL "THIRTY-SIX OF D?"
YEAH, HE HAD TO DROP HIS CANDIDACY AFTER THE PRESS FOUND OUT THAT HE TRIED TO HAVE SEX WITH JERRI IN PUBLIC AT STRIP CLUBS.
WELL, IF YOU WERE MARRIED TO THE GALAXY'S HOTTEST BORG, WOULDN'T YOU?
CHECK GOOGLE. I'M SURE HE'S NOT THE FIRST GUY TO HAVE THAT IDEA.
This has been "Why the cast of Full Frontal Nerdity shouldn't discuss politics."
Thank you.
http://www.nodwick.com

 by Kyle Stanley Hunter • illustrated by Kyle Stanley Hunter

THE ART OF KUJI-IN

As consummate opportunists and masters of hidden knowledge, ninjas frequently make use of the subtle spiritual energy that permeates all things: *ki*. Through this force, ninjas are formidable even when naked and imprisoned. Unlike monks, who strive to be one with this energy and immerse themselves in its flow, ninjas take a more pragmatic and aggressive approach, seeking to shape it to their needs. This can be done with the mystic art of *kuji-in*. The ninja is able to rapidly expend his *ki* for a number of fantastic effects by executing ancient formulae composed of the eighty-one mystical ninja hand signs. These formulae are known as *jutsu*.



Ninjas who specialize in *kuji-in* focus on survival, endurance, and the martial arts, rather than the usual stealth and trickery associated with their kin. They often take levels in fighter to capitalize on the additional feats. Like monks, *kuji-in* specialists spend many hours in meditation, often under the most grueling conditions. They temper the steel of their souls, practicing their *jutsu* for days on end under waterfalls or in withering heat. Even these ninjas are only able to master precious few of these mystical techniques, so they cultivate fearsome reputations as deadly specialists. Teams of low-level ninjas often deploy with a single *kuji-in* master, whose chosen technique can bolster the abilities of the entire team. For example, one ninja who can execute the Hidden Kingdom Jutsu can confuse an entire palace guard, rendering them easy targets for his silent comrades.

To learn *kuji-in*, the ninja must take *ki* feats. All *ki* feats require *ki* power, and unless otherwise noted, cost one of the ninja's daily *ki* power uses. Using a *ki* feat is a swift action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Additionally, in order to use a *jutsu* the ninja must have both hands free and empty. In some cases, a ninja may expend a daily use of his *ki* power as a free action to maintain a *jutsu's* ability he is already using without reforming the *justu's* gestures. The DC to save against a ninja's *jutsu* equals 10 + 1/2 his ninja levels + his Wisdom modifier, and his caster level equals his ninja level. Unless otherwise noted, a *jutsu's* effect is an extraordinary ability, even if it is based on a spell.

HIDDEN KINGDOM JUTSU [KI]

Your *ki* can roil from you like a shadowy mist, perplexing your

pursuers and immersing them in a dreamlike landscape.

Prerequisite: Ghost strike ability.

Benefit: You can spend one daily use of your *ki* power to create an effect similar to the spell *hallucinatory terrain*, with the following modifications. The effect's range is a 40-foot radius emanating from you, and the duration is 1 round. You can expend additional uses of your *ki* power to maintain the effect for 2 additional rounds per use spent.

Jutsu Focus [General]

Your *jutsu* are especially formidable.

Prerequisite: At least two *ki* feats.

Benefit: The DC of any save made to resist any of your *jutsu* increases by +2. In addition, if a *jutsu* allows you to expend additional uses of your *ki* power to increase its effectiveness you may automatically treat that *jutsu* as if you had spent one additional daily use of your ki power for free. You may spend actual daily uses of your *ki* power on top of this virtual daily use.

Rabbit Prince Jutsu [Ki]

You can suppress your *ki* to focus on your smallness in comparison to the vastness of the cosmos. Your steps become light and time loosens its hold on you.

Prerequisite: Ghost step (invisible) ability.

Benefit: You can spend one daily use of your *ki* power to move as if under the effects of an *expeditious retreat* spell for 1 round. In addition, when under the effect of the Rabbit Prince Jutsu your jump distance is not limited by your height.

Ringing Fist Jutsu [Ki]

You can vibrate your hands to disrupt material harmonics.

Prerequisite: *Ki* dodge ability.

Benefit: You can spend one daily use of your *ki* power to cause your hands to vibrate intensely for the remainder of your turn. Any successful unarmed attack you make that round against an object also causes that object to be affected as though by a *knock* spell or a targeted *shatter* spell. You choose which effect to create at the time of your attack.

River Eel Jutsu [Ki]

A vibrating, shimmering field of *ki* surrounds you and allows you to move with little friction.

Prerequisite: *Ki* dodge ability.

Benefit: You can spend one daily use of your *ki* power to move as if under the effects of a *freedom of movement* spell for 1 round.

Shadow Puppet Jutsu [Ki]

The symbols and gestures of this *jutsu* seem so complex and speedy that they bewilder the viewer. In fact, you are subtly infiltrating his mind with your *ki*.

Prerequisite: *Ki* dodge ability.

Benefit: You can spend one daily use of your *ki* power to distract a single creature within 30 feet that can see you and that fails a Will save. A distracted creature is flat-footed until the beginning of its next turn. This is a mind-affecting effect.

Thousand Faces Jutsu [Ki]

You recall and mimic the subtle *ki* frequencies of others, obscuring your true spirit and clouding the minds of those who view you.

Prerequisite: Ghost step (invisible) ability.

Benefit: You can spend one daily use of your *ki* power to change your form for 1 minute, as the spell *alter self*, except the new form must be of your same size and type. You gain none of the movement or combat benefits of the new form. Any wings, fins, or other body parts that grant an actual creature of the chosen kind an alternative form of movement are merely decorative and nonfunctional on you.

You can spend two daily uses of your *ki* power to assume the form of a specific creature of your type for 1 minute. Anyone who knows the specific creature you are emulating gains a bonus on her Spot check to see through your disguise as described on page 73 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Wind Oxen Jutsu [Ki]

You can drive back an opponent with the force of your *ki*.

Prerequisite: Ghost strike ability.

Benefit: You can spend one daily use of your *ki* power to perform a bull rush attack on an adjacent target (see *Player's Handbook*, page 154). You do not, however, need to actually touch the target, nor do you provoke an attack of opportunity. You make a special bull rush check with a bonus equal to your Wisdom modifier + one-half your ninja class level. You may expend additional daily uses of your *ki* power to gain a cumulative +4 bonus on your check per daily use spent. You cannot move along with the target if you win the opposed check, but the target is still driven back an additional 5 feet for each 5 points by which your check exceeds your target's.

Other Ninja Tricks

Along with rogues and scouts, ninjas excel at the use of traps in their lairs and when attempting to capture (or at least slow down) someone on the move. After years of practice and honing their techniques, ninjas invented ways of swiftly creating simple traps under pressure.

Guerilla Trapsmith [General]

You are adept at rigging small, improvised traps.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on Craft (trapmaking) checks. The DCs to find and remove your traps are increased by +2. In addition, you can create a booby trap (CR 1/2) in 5 rounds.

Normal: The time to create a booby trap is a full minute. See page 41 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide II* for details on booby traps.

by Christopher Wissel • illustrated by Peter Bergting

SUBTLE SPELLS

ARCANE

One relies on silence and stealth; the other lives by wit and trickery. While they represent two distinct perspectives concerning the use and utility of arcane spells, both the assassin and the bard nonetheless rely on their magic. Whereas the bard receives nominally more support in his spellcasting than the assassin, they both face relatively limited spellcasting choices. To that end we present these two lists in the vein of the cleric, druid, and ranger spell-by-school lists presented in *Dragon* #340 and #341, respectively.

Assassin Spells

A popular prestige class for NPCs and PCs of questionable morality, an assassin relies mostly on his death attack and sneak attack abilities. To set himself up for such attacks, however, he sometimes must turn to magical means of escaping detection. While his spellcasting ability is roughly on par with that of a paladin or ranger, the assassin might still need to know which school his spells belong to.

This quick reference lists every assasin spell from the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, broken down by school.

1st-Level Assassin Spells

Conj	*Obscuring mist*
Div	*Detect poison, true strike*
Ench	*Sleep*
Illus	*Disguise self, ghost sound*
Trans	*Feather fall, jump*

2nd-Level Assassin Spells

Abjur *Undetectable alignment*
Evoc *Darkness*
Illus *Illusory script, invisibility*
Trans *Alter self, cat's grace, fox's cunning, pass without trace, spider climb*

3rd-Level Assassin Spells

Abjur *Magic circle against good, nondetection*
Ench *Deep slumber*
Evoc *Deeper darkness*
Illus *Misdirection*
Necro *False life*

4th-Level Assassin Spells

Abjur *Freedom of movement*
Conj *Dimension door*
Div *Clairaudience/clairvoyance, locate creature*
Ench *Modify memory*
Illus *Greater invisibility*
Necro *Poison*
Trans *Glibness*

Bard Spells

Learning the intricate details of every spell might appeal to some bearded homebody locked away in his library tower, choking himself on the dust of crumbling tomes, but the free-wandering folk who travel the countryside playing for room and board have little time to concern themselves with such pedantry. Some bards, however, spend their time in colleges, focusing on the theory of their craft more than its application. From them comes a listing of bardic spells by school, aiding their brethren when selecting spells.

This quick reference lists every bard spell from the *Player's Handbook*, broken down by school.

0-Level Bard Spells

Abjur *Resistance*
Conj *Summon instrument*
Div *Detect magic, know direction, read magic*
Ench *Daze, lullaby*
Evoc *Dancing lights, flare, light*
Illus *Ghost sound*
Trans *Mage hand, mending, message, open/close*
Univ *Prestidigitation*

1st-Level Bard Spells

Abjur *Alarm, obscure object, remove fear, undetectable alignment*
Conj *Cure light wounds, grease, summon monster I, unseen servant*
Div *Comprehend languages, detect secret doors, identify*
Ench *Charm person, hypnotism, lesser confusion, sleep, Tasha's hideous laughter*
Illus *Disguise self, magic mouth, Nystul's magic aura, silent image, ventriloquism*
Necro *Cause fear*
Trans *Animate rope, erase, expeditious retreat, feather fall*

2nd-Level Bard Spells

Conj *Cure moderate wounds, delay poison, glitterdust, summon monster II, summon swarm*
Div *Detect thoughts, locate object, tongues*
Ench *Animal messenger, animal trance, calm emotions, daze monster, enthrall, heroism, hold person, rage, suggestion*
Evoc *Darkness, shatter, sound burst*
Illus *Blur, hypnotic pattern, invisibility, minor image, mirror image, misdirection, silence*
Necro *Blindness/deafness, scare*
Trans *Alter self, cat's grace, eagle's splendor, fox's cunning, pyrotechnics, whispering wind*

3rd-Level Bard Spells

Abjur *Dispel magic, remove curse*
Conj *Cure serious wounds, phantom steed, sepia snake sigil, summon monster III*
Div *Clairaudience/clairvoyance, scrying, see invisibility, speak with animals*
Ench *Charm monster, confusion, crushing despair, deep slumber, good hope, lesser geas*
Evoc *Daylight, Leomund's tiny hut*
Illus *Displacement, illusory script, invisibility sphere, major image*
Necro *Fear*
Trans *Blink, gaseous form, glibness, haste, sculpt sound, secret page, slow*

4th-Level Bard Spells

Abjur *Break enchantment, freedom of movement, repel vermin*
Conj *Cure critical wounds, dimension door, Leomund's secure shelter, neutralize poison, summon monster IV*
Div *Detect scrying, legend lore, locate creature, speak with plants*
Ench *Dominate person, hold monster, modify memory*
Evoc *Shout*
Illus *Greater invisibility, hallucinatory terrain, rainbow pattern, shadow conjuration, zone of silence*

5th-Level Bard Spells

Abjur *Greater dispel magic*
Conj *Mass cure light wounds, summon monster V*
Ench *Greater heroism, mass suggestion, mind fog, song of discord*
Illus *Dream, false vision, mirage arcana, mislead, nightmare, persistent image, seeming, shadow evocation, shadow walk*

6th-Level Bard Spells

Conj *Heroes' feast, mass cure moderate wounds, summon monster VI*
Div *Analyze dweomer, find the path, greater scrying*
Ench *Geas/quest, mass charm monster, Otto's irresistible dance*
Evoc *Greater shout, sympathetic vibration*
Illus *Permanent image, programmed image, project image, veil*
Necro *Eyebite*
Trans *Animate objects, mass cat's grace, mass eagle's splendor, mass fox's cunning*

by William L. Christensen • illustrated by Peter Bergting

DIVINE

THE WILD HUNT

Celtic lore tells of the Wild Hunt, a ghostly phenomenon that manifests at night to terrorize those unfortunate enough to find themselves in its path. A horrible warrior wielding spear or bow leads the hunt and kills all that he encounters. This dark huntsman, the Master of the Hunt, leads roughly two-dozen monstrous hounds known as the *Cwn Annwn* (pronounced coon ANNoon). He guides these "death dogs"—or "hounds of hell"—in search of prey. Those who escape the hunter's wrath once the hounds catch his scent are few, although such folk are not unheard of. Most people learn of the hunt only from the mouths of these lucky survivors, but many a traveler about after dark has heard the baying of these horrible hounds echoing in the distance—a sound reputed to turn the blood of even the bravest adventurers cold.

There exist those who worship this dark hunting party, paying homage to the merciless Master of the Hunt. Although mostly neutral, some beings of evil alignment worship the huntsman as well. Druids make up the majority of those who worship the Master of the Hunt, but clerics account for the most zealous followers.

MASTER OF THE HUNT

Lesser God (Neutral)

The Master of the Hunt's features are veiled by black leather armor, an ebon skull mask, and an antlered crown. His eyes glow a ghostly green and his skin is jet black. He revels in visiting the Material Plane and hunting whatever or whomever might be lurking about. He does not discriminate when choosing his victims (be they humanoid, animal, or less natural creatures), and seems to have no other motive than to hunt and enjoy his hunt. Although neutral, he leans slightly toward evil.

Portfolio: Hunting, beasts, night.

Domain: Animal, Hunt, Strength, Night.

Cleric Training: Becoming a cleric of the Master of the Hunt is fraught with peril. Initiates are taught to track prey and hunt with the spear and the bow, but they are also expected to learn the methods of flight their prey use when being hunted. Thus, the initiate's final test is to act as the prey of his fellow huntsmen. He is given an hour before dusk to flee through the woods, carrying nothing but the clothes on his back. If he can elude the hunters and their hounds until dawn, he is welcomed into the order. If caught, he dies.

Quests: The Master of the Hunt makes no distinction among those he hunts, but his followers are often more discriminating.

Sects typically have a particularly hated enemy (usually a creature intruding upon their territory, often orcs or other humanoids) that they track and destroy during massive hunting expeditions. A sect attempts to drive its chosen enemy from its lands, mercilessly hunting them down to the last.

Prayers: Prayers to the Master of the Hunt often begin with the phrase, "Great and terrible horned lord," but vary greatly thereafter depending upon the alignment of the supplicant and his needs.

Temples: Temples to the Master of the Hunt are located deep in the woods and resemble grand hunting lodges decorated with antlers and trophy heads of the beasts his worshipers have acquired over the years. Rangers, druids, and other woodsfolk frequent these areas, and temples are typically built a single day apart, making them popular waypoints on long journeys or hunts.

Rites: Followers of the Master of the Hunt participate in large organized hunts on nights leading into the equinoxes and solstices. During these hunts they dress in dark leather armor and adorn themselves with black skull masks and crowns of antlers in honor of their deity. They hunt from dusk to dawn, culling whatever creatures their hounds catch scent of.

Herald and Allies: When the Master of the Hunt needs to intervene in mortal affairs, he sends his herald, a 20th-level ranger known as Herne the Hunter, who rides a nightmare and wears a black skull mask and a crown of antlers. The Master of the Hunt counts as his allies nightmares, Nessian warhounds (of neutral or neutral evil alignment), and Cauchemar nightmares.

Relics: Relics include *bracers of archery* (lesser and greater versions), *eyes of the eagle*, *goggles of night*, and *slaying arrows*.

New Rules

The Master of the Hunt and those who worship him might make use of a variety of new rules.

Hunt Domain

Core Deities: Ehlonna, Obad-Hai, Llerg
Forgotten Realms Deities: Eilistraee, Malar
Eberron Deity: Balinor
Granted Power: You gain Track as a bonus feat.

Hunt Domain Spells

1	Hide from Animals
2	Bear's Endurance
3	Snare
4	Locate Creature
5	Commune with Nature
6	Find the Path
7	Control Weather
8	Discern Location
9	Foresight

Night Domain

Core Deity: Celestian
Forgotten Realms Deities: Eilistraee, Selune, Shar
Eberron Deities: The Keeper, The Shadow
Granted Power: You gain low-light vision. If you already have low-light vision you gain darkvision with a range of 30 ft.

Night Domain Spells

1	Sleep
2	Deeper Darkness
3	Deep Slumber
4	Phantom Steed
5	Nightmare
6	Shadow Walk
7	Waves of Exhaustion
8	Shadow Evocation, Greater
9	Shade

Frenzied Hunt [General]

You can channel the divine to send yourself into a powerful but dangerous alternative state of being.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +6, ability to turn or rebuke undead, must have either witnessed the Wild Hunt taking place or have been hunted by the Master of the Hunt's followers.

Benefit: You can spend a turn or rebuke attempt as a free action to enter into a wild state of frenzy. Your base attack bonus becomes equal to your character level (which might grant you extra attacks), you gain a +4 enhancement bonus to Dexterity, and a +4 enhancement bonus on all Listen and Spot checks. Due to the focused bloodlust of the frenzy you can only use physical attacks, favoring ranged (or thrown) attacks when possible. You cannot cast spells or take any other action that requires concentration as long as the frenzy lasts.

Much like the Master of the Hunt, when in this alternative state of mind you seek only to kill prey. You consider any non-allied creatures within your line of sight as prey. Once a creature you designate as prey falls you stop attacking and move on to another creature. Despite the bloodlust you can always differentiate between friend and foe.

To determine the number of rounds the frenzy lasts, roll a turning check (1d20 + Cha modifier) and consult Table 8–9: Turning Undead on page 159 of the *Player's Handbook*. The duration of the frenzy equals the maximum Hit Dice of undead you could affect with that turning check. If you down all available prey before the frenzy ends you immediately begin a hunt, searching for more prey. During this time you go to any length to find another suitable creature to hunt, even if it means risking life and limb. You may attempt to end the frenzy early by succeeding at a Will save (DC 15 + rounds remaining of the frenzy). You can attempt this Will save once per round. At the end of the frenzy you lose all of its benefits and become fatigued for a number of minutes equal to the number of rounds you spent in the frenzied state.

by John E. Ling, Jr. • illustrated by Peter Bergting

TRIBAL HALFLINGS

Tribal halflings, those who take halfling barbarian substitution levels, are just as dangerous as any other barbarian, but for different reasons. These small warriors can take advantage of their size and slip into areas inaccessible to larger races. When it comes time to stand tall in battle, however, these barbarians prove as tough in combat as any of the bigger races.

A substitution level is a level of a given class that you take instead of the level described for the standard class. Selecting a substitution level is not the same as multiclassing—you remain with the class for which the substitution level is taken. The class features of the substitution level simply replace those of the standard level.

Only a member of the appropriate race can take a racial substitution level.

You can select each substitution level only at a specific class level. When you take a substitution level for your class at a given level, you give up the class features gained from the standard class at that level, and you get the substitution level's features instead. You can't go back and gain the class features for the level you swapped out—when you take your next level in the standard class, you gain the next higher level as if you had gained the previous level normally.

HALFLING BARBARIAN SUBSTITUTION LEVELS

Halflings who come from tribal or barbaric cultures gain access to new abilities.

CLASS SKILLS

Halfling barbarian substitution levels have the class skills of the standard barbarian class.

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Intelligence modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the halfling barbarian's racial substitution levels.

Halfling Rage (Ex): Halfling barbarians learn to minimize the impact of their size while in combat. Whenever a halfling barbarian rages, treat him as a Medium creature whenever doing so would be beneficial, such as while in a grapple. While raging, the halfling's size actually increases slightly, and he therefore loses his +1 size bonus to AC and on attacks. Otherwise, this ability is exactly like the standard rage ability.

Whenever the halfling barbarian gains additional uses of the rage ability, he instead gains additional uses of this ability. Feats that alter the rage ability, such as Extended Rage or Instantaneous Rage from *Complete Warrior*, instead alter the halfling rage ability.

This class feature replaces the standard barbarian's rage ability.

Intimidating Presence (Ex): A halfling barbarian who takes the

3rd-level racial substitution level gains ritualistic scarring and tribal tattoos that make him a frightening sight to behold. Beginning at this level, the halfling barbarian gains a +1 bonus on Intimidate checks. If you are also using the scarification rules presented in the "Ritual Markings" article in *Dragon* #340, markings from this ability count as traditional scarring.

This class feature replaces the standard barbarian's trap sense ability. Whenever the halfling barbarian would otherwise gain an additional +1 to his trap sense ability, he instead gains an additional +1 bonus on Intimidate checks. If the halfling barbarian gains the trap sense ability from another class (such as rogue), that ability functions normally.

Bigger Than Life (Ex): A halfling barbarian who takes the 5th-level racial substitution level makes Intimidate checks as if he were size Medium. If the halfling barbarian is under an effect that actually makes his size Medium (such as an *enlarge person* spell), this ability has no further impact, but he retains his bonus on Intimidate checks from the intimidating presence ability.

This class feature replaces the standard barbarian's improved uncanny dodge ability.

Substitution Levels In Action

First introduced in the *Planar Handbook*, substitution levels appeared in numerous books thereafter, never with a thorough explanation of their use. In order to remove some of their mystery, the following (using the halfling barbarian levels of this article) provides an extended example of their use.

Howard thinks making a halfling barbarian would be a fun choice and thinks the halfling barbarian racial substitution levels make a good alternative to the standard class. He decides his halfling barbarian, Fenrin, is a nimble warrior, so at 1st level he chooses the first available halfling barbarian substitution level instead of a level of the standard barbarian. Using Fenrin's lithe form to best advantage, Howard chooses Weapon Finesse as his halfling's 1st-level feat. Howard chooses the light pick, in large part because the high critical multiplier represents a brutal weapon that can still be finessed.

At 2nd level, Howard advances Fenrin, giving him a second level in barbarian. At 3rd level, Howard has to choose between the standard barbarian level presented in the *Player's Handbook* and the substitution level. While Howard would like the bonus on Fenrin's Intimidate skill, he decides he would rather add the standard class's 3rd level. Note that Howard could have made the opposite choices, giving Fenrin the standard barbarian level at 1st and the substitution level at 3rd.

Howard continues to level Fenrin in the barbarian class, and at 5th level he once again must decide between the standard class and the racial substitution level. Howard is willing to give up improved uncanny dodge for the removal of the –4 penalty Fenrin encounters when attempting to intimidate Medium or larger foes. At 5th level Fenrin appears as shown in the following stat block.

If Howard decided to add a level of fighter to Fenrin to make him a barbarian 4/fighter 1, Fenrin would not qualify to take the 5th-level halfling barbarian substitution level, even though he is a 5th-level character. At 6th level, Howard could then have Fenrin take a 5th level of barbarian, giving him the ability to take the final halfling barbarian substitution level.

Fenrin **CR 5**
Male halfling barbarian 5
NG Small humanoid
Init +3; **Senses** Listen +9, Spot +2
Languages Common, Halfling

AC 19, touch 15, flat footed 15
hp 48 (5 HD)
Fort +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3; +2 vs fear

Spd 30 feet (6 squares)
Melee +1 *light pick* +12 (1d3+2/x4)
Ranged sling +11 (1d3+1)
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +1
Special Atk halfling rage 2/day
Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*

Abilities Str 12, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12
SQ bigger than life, fast movement, illiteracy, trap sense +1
Feats Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (light pick)
Skills Climb +8, Hide +8, Intimidate +9, Jump +5, Listen +9, Move Silently +6, Spot 2, Survival +7
Possessions +1 *light pick*, sling, 20 +1 *sling stones*, 10 sling stones, +1 *hide armor*, *cloak of resistance* +2, backpack, bedroll, flint and steel, trail rations (3 days), waterskin, whetstone, 9 gp

Halfling Rage (Ex): When raging, Fenrin's stats change as follows:
AC 17, touch 13, flat footed 13
hp 52
Fort +11, **Will** +5
Melee +1 *light pick* +12 (1d3+4/x4)
Ranged sling +11 (1d3+3)
Grp +3
Abilities Str 16, Con 18
Skills Climb +5, Jump +7

Halfling Barbarian Racial Substitution Levels

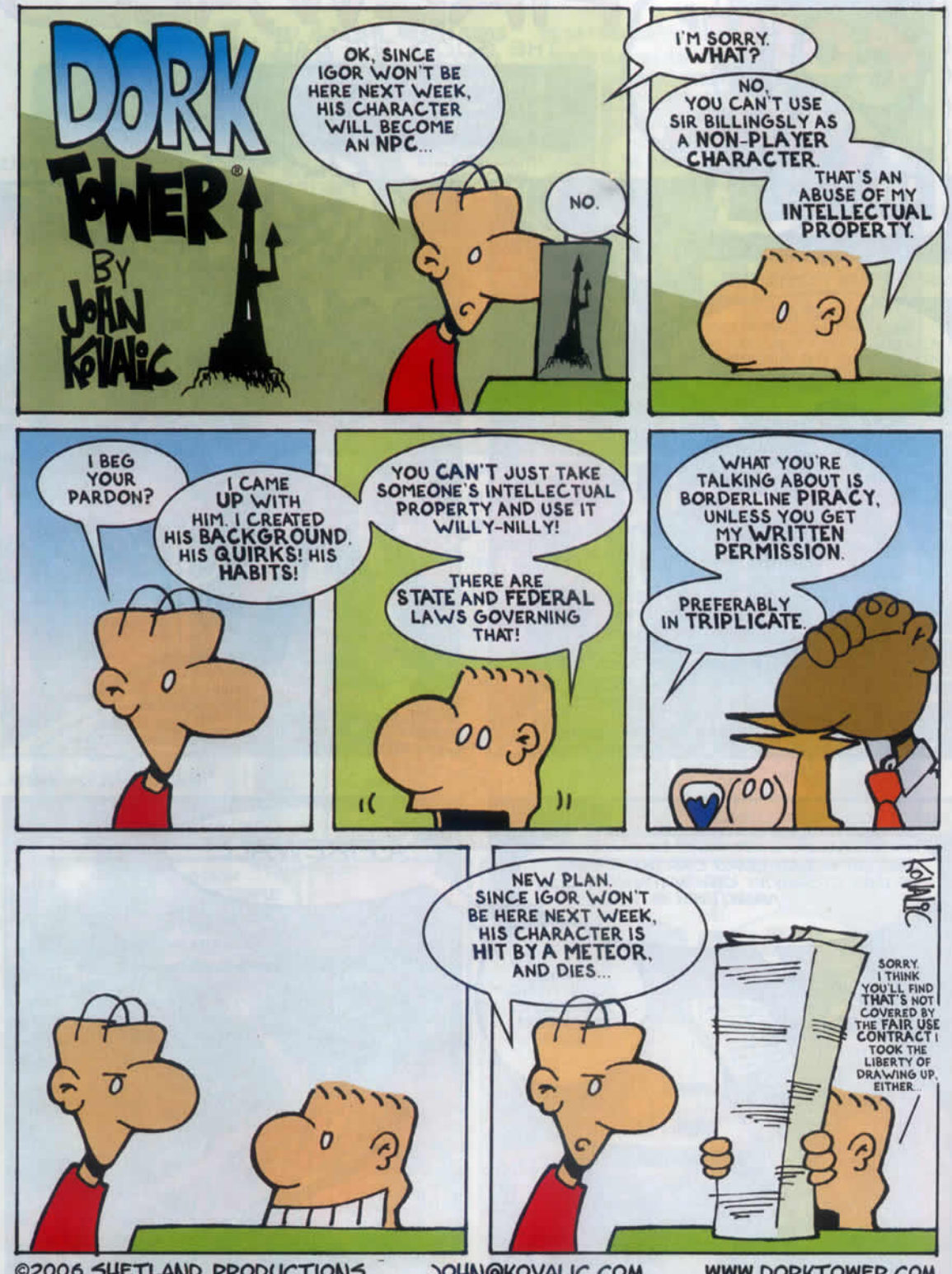
Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Fast movement, illiteracy, halfling rage 1/day
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Intimidating presence +1
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Bigger than life

Nodwick

by Aaron Williams
www.nodwick.com

You can't deny laughter; when it comes, it plops down in your favorite chair and stays as long as it wants. -Stephen King

I DON'T KNOW, PIFFANY. IF A GOD WANTS HIS OLD TEMPLE FIXED, WHY WOULD HE BLOW UP HALF THE COUNTRY-SIDE, KEEPING PEOPLE AWAY?
PLUS, HE SOUNDS LIKE HE'S A LITTLE OFF HIS ROCKER.
HE CAN'T HELP IT! THAT'S WHY WE NEED TO GET TO HIS TEMPLE!
UGH! WHERE'S ALL THIS STATIC ELECTRICITY COMING FROM?
-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA
AFTER DODGING MORE LIGHTNING...
IS THIS THE PLACE?
YES, BUT THE CLERGY THAT WORSHIPPED HERE WAS RUN OUT CENTURIES AGO.
SO THIS GOD WANTS TO MAKE A COMEBACK?
NOT REALLY. I HEAR HE'S RETIRED.
GODS RETIRE? WHERE, TO SOMEPLACE WARM?
THERE'S ONLY ONE PLACE LIKE THAT I CAN THINK OF.
SAY, EVERYONE?
THESE FINE PEOPLE SEEM TO THINK WE'RE TRESPASSING ON THEIR TURF.
GIVE UP OR WE GUT LITTLE BIG-NOSE MAN!
IT'S THAT THREAT AGAIN. THINK IT'LL WORK THIS TIME?
SNICKER!
TAKE US TO YOUR CHIEF!
YOU WANT TO REASON WITH THEM, DON'T YOU?
I MEMORIZED SPELLS FROM THE BLACK-TABBED SECTION OF MY SPELLBOOK FOR NOTHING, I GUESS...
HUMANS DRIVE US FROM OUR HOMELAND, SO WE TAKE TEMPLE! NOT GIVE IT BACK, NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU GOD LAUGH AND THROW SKY-FIRE!
I CAN GET THE GOD TO STOP IF YOU JUST GIVE ME YOUR HELMET FOR A SECOND.
HOINK
HIS IDOLS ARE VERY TICKLISH. 'BYE!
THE MORE I LEARN ABOUT THE GODS, THE LESS I WANT TO KNOW.
AMEN, BROTHER.


DORK TOWER®
BY JOHN KOVALIC
OK, SINCE IGOR WON'T BE HERE NEXT WEEK, HIS CHARACTER WILL BECOME AN NPC...
NO.
I'M SORRY. WHAT?
NO. YOU CAN'T USE SIR BILLINGSLY AS A NON-PLAYER CHARACTER.
THAT'S AN ABUSE OF MY INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY.
I BEG YOUR PARDON?
I CAME UP WITH HIM. I CREATED HIS BACKGROUND. HIS QUIRKS! HIS HABITS!
YOU CAN'T JUST TAKE SOMEONE'S INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND USE IT WILLY-NILLY!
THERE ARE STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS GOVERNING THAT!
WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT IS BORDERLINE PIRACY, UNLESS YOU GET MY WRITTEN PERMISSION.
PREFERABLY IN TRIPLICATE.
NEW PLAN. SINCE IGOR WON'T BE HERE NEXT WEEK, HIS CHARACTER IS HIT BY A METEOR, AND DIES...
KOVALIC
SORRY. I THINK YOU'LL FIND THAT'S NOT COVERED BY THE FAIR USE CONTRACT I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF DRAWING UP, EITHER.

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ZOGONIA
By TONY MOSELEY
Yaaawn.... I'M GOING TO NAP WHILE YOU GUYS POKE AROUND. WAKE ME IF YOU FIND ANY TREASURE.
KEV! YOU ARE NAPPING ON A SACRIFICIAL ALTAR!
Yeh, So? ... THE BLOOD IS DRY.
DINDIL?
ARE YOU FEELING OKAY?
Z Z Z
TONY MOSELEY © 2006 WWW.ZOGONIA.COM
A VOICE TELLS ME... THE HUMAN ON THE ALTAR... ..MUST..BE.... ..SACRIFICED.
RESIST THE VOICE, DINDIL!! EXERT YOUR WILLPOWER!
BLOOD FOR THE DARK GOD!!
DANG.
BLOOD FOR THE DARK GOD!!!
Oof!
Z Z
KEV! WAKE UP!
BLOOD FOR THE DARK GOD!!
GET OFF THE ALTAR!
NOW!
??
DOMATO?
WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
SOMETHING EXTREMELY SERIOUS! WHEN KEV-
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!!
YOU UNETHICALLY SEARCHED MY POCKETS!! I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW I BROUGHT THESE DIAMONDS WITH ME INTO THE DUNGEON! AND YOU CAN'T PROVE I DIDN'T!! HAH!!!
So DEAL WITH IT!
SNAP

The Order of the Stick™

by Rich Burlew

click
Wow, that trap was nasty! Are you OK?
Trap? What trap?
Uh, the one that just spewed like a gazillion gallons of acid on you.
I don't remember any trap.
You don't— Roy, you're still standing in acid right now!
I think I would remember if I had gotten hit by a trap.
Well you'd think I'd remember when you went blind, but apparently I don't.
click
Look, Haley, don't you think you're—
WHRRRRR!
—being just a little paranoid here?
You didn't see that?!?
See what?
The giant saw blade with the...
Oh! Wait! I get it! Only rogues can find traps with a Search DC over 20!
Well, true, but I don't see how that matters, since we haven't seen any traps today.
I'm trying to tell you that yes, we have!
OK, I'm sorry, but this has gone on long enough.
Haley, I'm not going to indulge your silly little paranoid rogue fantasies any longer. There were NO traps in this hallway. Whatever you saw was just in your deluded mind.
Now if you're ready to stop being childish and start discussing traps in a mature manner, I need you to Search that door over there for me.
OIL
Welcome
...
All clear.
I'm glad we understand each other.

©2006 Rich Burlew Read more Order of the Stick online at www.GiantITP.com. Trap Sense -2